



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Response to the OSCE Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities**

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Kate Byrnes  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
November 24, 2016

The United States welcomes Dr. Yigitgüden back to the Permanent Council. Dr. Yigitgüden, thank you for your comprehensive report on the activities of the Office of the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities. We appreciate the efforts by you and your team to assist participating States in fulfilling their commitments in the Second Dimension. As highlighted in your report, the Office of the Coordinator remains active in a wide variety of areas across the OSCE region, helping ensure that the Organization's economic and environmental work contributes effectively to comprehensive security.

Throughout this year, OSCE events related to economic and environmental activities have brought together civil society, academic experts, government officials, and business representatives to discuss the effect of good governance on the investment climate; the fight against corruption, money-laundering, and terrorism financing; the security of supply chains; and labor migration.

We continue to support the German Chairmanship's focus on good governance and connectivity. There is broad interest within our Organization in increasing economic connectivity among OSCE participating States, particularly those in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Dr. Yigitgüden, I encourage you and your staff to help lead this effort, utilizing both the OSCE's convening power and the expertise of OSCE executive structures. Working together, OSCE participating States, their Partners for Cooperation, field missions, and the OSCE Border Management Staff College can play an important part in removing barriers to cross-border cooperation, supporting trade facilitation and customs cooperation, and improving the regional investment climate. Opportunities also exist to work with other regional initiatives to strengthen economic ties, including the New Silk Road and the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program. By engaging with stakeholders across the region in a way that is inclusive of all participating States, the Office of the Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities can support this work and foster more sustainable growth and connectivity.

While progress has been made in furthering the OSCE's economic and environmental work, we continue to believe that the Second Dimension provides many more opportunities to strengthen security, build confidence, and restore trust. At the same time, we must emphasize that pursuing goals such as economic connectivity cannot make up for the defiance of OSCE principles and commitments by OSCE participating States. This includes the violation by some participating States of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of their neighbors, and the disregard at home and abroad of principles and commitments regarding human rights and

fundamental freedoms. The OSCE's comprehensive approach to security requires participating States to fulfill their commitments in all three dimensions.

The United States acknowledges the concerted effort made by the Office of the Coordinator to involve the private business community in the OSCE's Second Dimension more closely. Representatives of the business community have played a much more active role during the 2016 German Chairmanship. Their participation in the various economic and environmental dimension meetings and conferences, and in particular at the Chairperson-in-Office Connectivity Conference in Berlin, has been invaluable. We are encouraged that in 2017, Austria plans to maintain and expand our dialogue with the private sector, and has made business partnerships a priority for its OSCE Chairmanship. The United States wholeheartedly supports this effort and believes the OSCE's Second Dimension work is more effective as a result. We look forward to working with the Office of the Coordinator and the incoming Austrian Chairmanship to enhance private sector participation in the Second Dimension even further.

Furthermore, we encourage the Office of the Coordinator to explore how the OSCE's economic and environmental activities can be aligned with the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As a regional organization under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, with a network of 17 OSCE field missions working with 60 Aarhus Centers, the OSCE is particularly well positioned to help participating States implement the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Significant overlap exists between these goals and OSCE commitments on economic and environmental issues. As participating States mobilize efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities, and tackle climate change, we encourage your office to lead the effort to align the OSCE's Second Dimension activities more closely with the UN 2030 Agenda.

Looking forward to Hamburg, the United States supports adoption of a ministerial decision on good governance and connectivity at this year's Ministerial Council. There is important work to be done in the Second Dimension, and broad support exists for a text that will advance OSCE efforts related to economic and environmental issues. We appreciate the Office of the Coordinator's ongoing support to the German Chairmanship with this draft decision, and are hopeful that consensus will be reached.

Dr. Yigitgüden, thank you again for the tremendous efforts of you and your staff over the past years in advancing OSCE Second Dimension work.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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