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United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the OSCE Economic and Environment Activities Coordinator Ambassador Vuk Žugić

As delivered by Acting Political Counselor Lane Darnell Bahl
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 31, 2019

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Ambassador Žugić, for your presentation today.

The United States welcomes your focus on preventing corruption through good governance and the tools of transparency, especially public reporting and access to information. One of your office's key contributions to security is building the capacity of institutions to govern, fend off malign foreign influence, and create and sustain conditions that maximize social and economic well-being within and among participating States. Corruption subverts democratic governance, undermines the rule of law, weakens borders, erodes inclusive economic growth, and enables organized crime. We encourage you to keep up the good fight.

In keeping with your assessment that "prevention is better than cure," we would urge that your office build its own capacity to recognize and report on the effectiveness of your preventative measures. In order to demonstrate that they are effective, preventative remedies—including your projects—must be tested and proven. By following up after each conference, workshop, seminar, or study tour, you would be able to learn which of your initiatives has achieved results or better enabled participants to apply what they learn to battle corruption. Follow-up efforts do not have to be expensive or time-consuming to be useful.

We welcome your focus on the positive aspects of digitalization and your office's creativity in introducing new technologies to adapt and increase your

effectiveness. The United States is supporting your office's digital platform that will build expertise and resilience to energy security threats. We also prioritize anti-corruption activities in our funding of extra-budgetary projects, and we encourage other participating States to contribute to these efforts—especially by supporting anti-corruption extra-budgetary projects in the Western Balkans that have a funding gap.

Thank you again, Ambassador, for your report to the Permanent Council. We look forward to continuing our excellent relations and productive partnership. As always, we reiterate our support to you, to your office, and to the Second Dimension as an integral component of the OSCE's comprehensive security approach.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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