



## United States Mission to the OSCE

### **Response to the Address by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr. Terry Davis**

As delivered by Chargé d' Affaires Kyle Scott  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
April 24, 2008

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We'd like to welcome Secretary General Davis to the Permanent Council and thank him for his report on the Council's work and its relationship with the OSCE.

The relationship between the OSCE and the Council of Europe has matured and become very well established. We are especially pleased with the long-term partnership the OSCE and the COE have developed on election observation. Cooperation and coordination in the field and between the respective focal points has become almost second nature. Given this success, the United States believes it may be time to move the relationship to a different level. Rather than having OSCE-COE coordination group meetings so frequently, we would see a place for less frequent but more long-term strategic planning under the guidance of each organization's member states. As we have made clear on numerous occasions, the United States supports OSCE coordination with the Council of Europe, at a minimum to avoid duplication, but also to add value where possible. At the same time, we must keep in mind that the OSCE and the COE are very different types of organizations, with differing memberships. The nature and substance of each organization's commitments are distinct, despite certain commonalities. It will not always be possible - or even desirable - for our organizations to cooperate on everything.

The United States is a tremendous supporter of the great work the OSCE does in all three dimensions. We also support in general the work the Council of Europe is doing to promote human rights and democracy. The U.S. is, of course, not a full member of the Council of Europe. For that reason, we generally do not participate in negotiations of new COE commitments and are not a party to many of the COE conventions. Some we openly disagree with.

Moreover, we remain concerned that, through the mechanism of coordination, the OSCE secretariat and our institutions have in some cases taken upon themselves the task of promoting adoption and implementation by the OSCE of COE commitments— although these commitments were negotiated without the involvement of some OSCE States or even against their wishes. The United States must reiterate that it cannot support efforts of this

kind. OSCE executive structures should focus on activities within their mandates and limit joint projects to those that fall within the scope of OSCE commitments. The objective should be to maximize the use and effectiveness of each organization's resources.

It is important that the OSCE and the COE, two of Europe's major organizations, coordinate, avoid duplication and complement each other's efforts wherever possible. Cooperation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe on areas of shared priorities can help support the promotion of human rights and the spread of democracy and security throughout Europe.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.