



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Hugh Neighbour
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 30, 2009

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

We would like to join you in welcoming the High Representative Valentin Inzko and Ambassador Robbins to the Permanent Council. Thank you for your comprehensive report. We appreciate the constructive cooperation between your office and the OSCE mission, and look forward to a continuing good relationship.

Vice President Biden's visit to Sarajevo in May was a clear signal of the United States' commitment to a peaceful, successful Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Vice President was frank and direct in his remarks to the BiH parliament: the path to a secure and prosperous future is through Euro-Atlantic integration, and in recent years progress on reforms necessary for this integration has slowed. The greatest dangers to the country's stability and future prosperity come from efforts to undermine the State and to roll back the successful reforms of the past 14 years. To move ahead, the country's leaders will have to look beyond narrow ethnic and political interests and focus on shared goals. Setbacks such as the delay of EU visa liberalization should not be viewed as cause for discouragement, but should be taken as reason to redouble efforts on what are well-defined, achievable goals that will bring tangible benefit to all the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The United States fully supports the work of the Office of the High Representative. The leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina should renew their efforts on completing the objectives and conditions identified by the Peace Implementation Council as essential for enabling OHR's transition to an EU Special Representative mission. The EU has made clear that this transition is essential if the country is to advance further on its path to eventual EU membership. The United States looks forward to working with the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities, the High Representative, and the OSCE to ensure that all objectives are meaningfully implemented prior to transition. We are confident in the High Representative's abilities to assist Bosnia and Herzegovina's leaders toward achieving this goal.

We again thank High Representative Inzko for his helpful report and the support he has given the OSCE. We wish you all the best in his work.

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.