



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the OSCE Project Coordinator in Uzbekistan, Ambassador John MacGregor

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires a.i. Kate M. Byrnes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 8, 2017

The United States welcomes the OSCE Project Coordinator in Uzbekistan, Ambassador John MacGregor, to the Permanent Council, and thanks him for his report. The United States underscores the importance of the Project Coordinator's work to assist Uzbekistan with the implementation of its OSCE commitments.

We support the Project Coordinator's efforts to assist the government with capacity building to fight terrorism, curb money laundering, and combat terrorist financing. We welcome the Project Coordinator's contributions to countering violent extremism, as well as its work to counter radicalization to violence online. We also value the efforts to build capacity and strengthen the criminal justice system, as well as to combat trafficking in persons. We support the Project Coordinator's assistance in developing media capacity in Uzbekistan and in promoting OSCE media freedom standards, and look forward to this year's Central Asia Media Conference, which will be held in Tashkent. We also support the Project Coordinator's assistance with developing the capacity of Uzbekistan's Ombudsman to receive and respond to online complaints.

The United States hopes that the Project Coordinator will strengthen cooperation with NGOs and further enhance efforts aimed at building the capacity of civil society organizations. Ambassador MacGregor, we encourage you to develop more projects that promote human rights and fundamental freedoms in Uzbekistan, including the freedoms of expression, association, peaceful assembly, and religion or belief.

The United States welcomes the full observation of Uzbekistan's presidential elections in December 2016. We take note of the conclusion in the final OSCE report that the "presidential election underscored the need of comprehensive reform to address long-standing systemic shortcomings." We urge Uzbekistan to take full advantage of OSCE assistance to follow up on the recommendations included in the report.

We welcome Uzbekistan's participation in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Winter Meeting in February, and the subsequent visit to Tashkent of PA President Muttonen. We look forward to Uzbekistan's continued involvement in the parliamentary side of the OSCE.

Ambassador MacGregor, thank you and your team for your work in support of Uzbekistan, and in support of our common OSCE commitments.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.