



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on International Missing Children's Day

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 24, 2012

On May 25, 1979, a six year old boy, Etan Patz, disappeared on his way to school in New York City. Etan remains missing.

In 1983, the United States began observing National Missing Children's Day on the anniversary of Etan's disappearance. In the course of three decades, we have been joined by many countries that will commemorate International Missing Children's Day tomorrow.

The United States takes this opportunity to call attention to the plight of missing and abducted children around the world, including those who have been abducted by a parent or other family member. We rededicate ourselves to the tasks of reuniting missing children with their families and improving our protection of children from abduction.

We recall our international obligations and commitments which advance the protection of children, including the Hague Abduction and Adoption Conventions, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography, as well as OSCE commitments, including Ministerial Decisions 15/06, 8/07, and 9/07.

We commend the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly which passed a resolution last year on international parental child abduction that highlighted this important issue. International parental child abductions affect families throughout the United States and around the world.

In the OSCE, the vast majority of participating States are party to the Hague Abduction Convention. To increase its effectiveness, however, the Convention must be implemented in every State. We take this opportunity to urge participating States that have not yet done so, to become party to the Convention.

In the words of Secretary of State Clinton, "Let's continue to stand up, speak out, and do our part to keep our most vulnerable citizens safe. And let's help children around the world come home."

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.