



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Report of the Head of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro, Ambassador Dominique Waag

As delivered by Chargé d’Affaires Katherine Brucker
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 4, 2024

Ambassador Waag, chère Dominique, welcome back to the Permanent Council. Your Mission’s partnership with the government of Montenegro is critically important to this Organization and to Montenegro’s European aspirations. We wish Montenegro luck in its goal to become the 28th member of the European Union by 2028. Montenegro is an important U.S. and NATO Ally, and a vibrant multiethnic democracy. You and your team are integral to Montenegro’s success in implementing vital national reforms.

Your engagement with the Parliament to train the staff of parliamentary committees and with the State Election Commission to develop voter education campaigns and train election day staff contributed to more resilient democratic institutions. The 2023 elections were competitive, well-run, and respected fundamental freedoms. The peaceful transition of power following the elections showed the value of your efforts.

We welcome your attention to implementing ODIHR-recommended electoral reforms, including increasing the transparency of elections and ensuring those with disabilities are able to vote. We also support your work with Montenegrin authorities and journalists’ self-regulatory bodies to counter hate speech while respecting freedom of expression, as well as your efforts to improve the capacity and transparency of media and the safety of journalists.

The United States recognizes the strides Montenegro has made in tackling corruption, which is critical for economic growth and development. We support Montenegro’s intention to develop a national strategy to fight corruption. The government has also made meaningful rule of law reforms, including adopting 12 laws and amendments to strengthen anti-corruption legislation and increase judicial independence.

Montenegro’s vibrant civil society is a key aspect of its democratic resilience, stability, and ability to counter foreign malign influence, including Russia’s efforts to sow division and promote instability through influence operations and disinformation campaigns. Your team’s engagement with civil society partners helps sustain that strength.

Finally, we know how difficult it is for you and your team to effectively implement your mandate without a Unified Budget. Working under fiscal duress, your team’s accomplishments are all the more impressive. We again urge all delegations to approve the Chair’s 2024 Unified Budget proposal.

Ambassador Waag, thank you for your leadership at the OSCE Mission to Montenegro, and for the dedicated work of your team across all three dimensions of security. As this is your final Permanent Council presentation, I want to thank you personally for your service to the OSCE. You will be missed.

###