



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Reports by the Three Committee Chairs

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Kate M. Byrnes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
February 9, 2017

The United States joins other delegations in expressing its sincere appreciation to each of the distinguished Chairs for their efforts and leadership in guiding our Organization. We would also like to acknowledge those who contribute constructively to the three committees. The spirit of constructive and principled engagement is the foundation upon which the success of the OSCE is built.

I would first like to address Ambassador Kongstad and the Security Committee's work in the First Dimension. Ambassador, your willingness to chair the committee at a time when horrific terror attacks continue throughout our region demonstrates your commitment to the OSCE's approach to comprehensive security. Addressing the drivers of violent extremism and radicalization to violence with an approach that promotes and respects human rights, is effective, and reinforces our commitment to Helsinki principles.

Ambassador Kongstad, the Security Committee is a key part of our comprehensive approach to addressing transnational threats. We support your plans to discuss the importance of security sector governance and reform, community policing, and aspects of border security. We further appreciate your support for the OSCE's work on reducing the risks of conflict in the use of information and communication technologies and we look forward to further implementation of our cyber-security confidence building measures. We also welcome further discussions on inclusive security and efforts to improve the role of women in the peace process. The evidence here is clear. The higher the rate of women's participation in the peace process, the higher the likelihood of success.

In the Second Dimension, the United States welcomes Ambassador Sarybay, the Chair of the Economic and Environmental Committee. Ambassador Sarybay, the United States supports the priorities outlined for the Economic and Environmental Dimension in 2017, including reducing environmental risks, improving energy security through resource efficiency and renewable energy, and strengthening security through good governance, greater economic participation, including greater participation of women, and economic partnerships. The United States attaches particular importance to the OSCE's work to promote good governance and to prevent, combat, and prosecute corruption. We were pleased that consensus was reached in Hamburg on a Ministerial Decision to strengthen good governance and promote connectivity, which provides an effective basis to enhance transparency and improve the business climate; expand cooperation on transport and trade facilitation; ensure adherence to labor, social, and environmental standards; and strengthen public-private partnerships in the fight against corruption, money laundering, and the

financing of terrorism. Each of these priorities will foster and improve security and stability in the OSCE region.

The United States strongly supports the OSCE's ongoing work to address human trafficking and labor exploitation in global supply chains, and we are pleased that this issue will be a priority in the Second Dimension. We look forward to the Economic and Environmental Committee meeting on May 24 that will address this important cross-dimensional issue, including by helping participating States lead by example through their own procurement policies.

We also welcome efforts to increase economic ties and connectivity among OSCE participating States. By removing barriers to cross-border cooperation, and supporting trade facilitation and customs cooperation, the OSCE and its participating States can foster more sustainable growth across the region. Regional efforts designed to improve economic connectivity in the Caucasus and Central Asia, such as the New Silk Road initiative and the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program, can be enhanced by OSCE activities in the region. We are eager to work with you, Ambassador Sarybay, on these and other initiatives, and we look forward to participating in the Second Preparatory Meeting of the Economic and Environmental Forum, to be held in Astana in June.

Ambassador MacLeod, the United States congratulates you on your appointment as Chair of the Human Dimension Committee, and thanks you for the new ideas, creative energy, and resources that you bring to the committee. It is imperative that this Organization assist participating States in implementing their human dimension commitments, and that we hold one another to account in this regard. We should clearly identify backsliding and failures to uphold OSCE commitments on human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Human Dimension Committee provides a vital forum to do just that – to discuss the implementation of our shared commitments and to hear from OSCE representatives and institutions, as well as civil society representatives and other experts. We also look forward to our annual discussions on the cross-dimensional topic of human trafficking.

Ambassador MacLeod, we welcome the relevant and timely ideas you have put forward for the committee's agenda, in particular those on freedom of expression, gender and democracy, combating torture, the freedoms of peaceful assembly and association, and challenges to democracy. We also appreciate your intention to host events outside the traditional committee format. In order to build on the momentum we achieved last year, we will look to mainstream the human rights of persons with disabilities in OSCE operations, and to discuss and apply them across the spectrum of topics in the committee, as well as cross-dimensionally. The United States continues to value voluntary reporting in the committee and plans to participate in that vital process again this year. Voluntary reporting is a useful and practical tool in all three committees, and particularly, for understanding participating States' successes and challenges in implementing Human Dimension commitments.

In closing, we are inspired by the leadership and vision exhibited by Ambassadors Kongstad, Sarybay, and MacLeod. The United States is grateful to each of you for your efforts and the support of your teams. With constructive engagement from each of the

participating States, we can work together to uphold and advance our shared OSCE commitments.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.