



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Address by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Portugal, H.E. Luis Filipe Marques Amado

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 12, 2007

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Foreign Minister, the United States is pleased that you are able to meet with us today in Vienna so soon after beginning Portugal's EU Presidency.

As one of the first nations to establish diplomatic ties with the United States, Portugal traditionally has played a key role in strengthening the Transatlantic Alliance and promoting the agenda of freedom and democracy.

Portugal has also shown an equal commitment to promoting the political, economic, and social development of the European Union, and we are delighted to see you take on your new duties.

Mr. Minister, we understand that Portugal will continue to pursue the agenda described in the 18-month program that you developed in concert with Germany and Slovenia, Portugal's partners in the tri-presidency.

The U.S. continues to look on the European Union as a vital strategic partner in addressing global challenges. With respect to your EU agenda, we welcome the EU's European Neighborhood Policy as you seek to build stronger ties to, and promote reform in, Ukraine, Moldova, and the South Caucasus.

We support the EU's determination to support the advancement of peaceful resolutions to the conflicts in the South Caucasus and Moldova. The United States continues to believe that the EU's goal of focusing greater attention on Central Asia complements the OSCE's work there, especially in the human dimension.

Under your leadership, we know we can count on the EU to maintain its focus on stabilizing the western Balkans, especially in view of Portugal's previous contributions to the region. Thousands of Portuguese troops have served in Bosnia with distinction, and Portugal maintains a battalion of troops in KFOR. We hope that pushing a European perspective for the Western Balkans as well as promoting a quick resolution of Kosovo's status will remain priorities under Portugal's presidency.

As the EU's frontiers move outward, and the Union takes on a greater collective role, we hope it does not lead to reduced emphasis on multilateral institutions such as the OSCE. The OSCE's

annual ministerial will take place in Madrid a little more than four months from now. In this respect, Mr. Minister, we hope to work together with the 27 EU member states as well as other OSCE participating States to reach meaningful decisions in Madrid that would:

- 1) commit the OSCE to funding a significant regional border security program in Central Asia;
- 2) endorse a decision to establish a Partnership Fund that will provide the OSCE with improved possibilities to work with countries on the OSCE's immediate frontiers;
- 3) agree to reevaluate our posture in the Balkans, including a decision to close the current field mission in Croatia once it meets remaining criteria;
- 4) consider new OSCE programs to counter radical extremism;
- 5) reflect advancement in OSCE's work toward resolution of Europe's separatist conflicts;
- 6) pledge renewed commitment to protect human rights defenders; and.
- 7) take a decision on possible OSCE engagement in Afghanistan in response to the request by our partner country.

As we renew our commitment to protect human rights defenders, we should also remind those individual leaders guilty of gross violations of human rights, wherever they may be, that there are consequences for such acts, and it cannot be business as usual.

Mr. Minister, we welcome all you have said about Portugal's goals as EU President for the next six months. Your country's leadership and management of the largest political grouping within the OSCE will be critical to success or failure at the OSCE's Ministerial in Madrid. We urge you to be ambitious, seek courageous solutions, and push your membership toward bold movement forward. We know this is not easy. We wish you the greatest success in the coming six months, and pledge to cooperate appropriately and firmly.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.