



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Response to ODIHR Director's Report**

As delivered by Ambassador Michael Carpenter  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
October 20, 2022

Director Mecacci, Matteo, welcome back to the Permanent Council, it's great to see you. Congratulations on a very successful Warsaw Human Dimension Conference. With some 1500 registered participants, as well as a diverse menu of well-attended and compelling side events, this event in my view exceeded expectations. The strong participation by civil society from across the OSCE region shows how necessary this conference was, and the United States applauds Poland's decision as Chair-in-Office to hold the meeting for the full two-week period, which allowed for a robust discussion of many topics. Together, all who have participated — governments and civil society representatives alike — have resolutely carried forward the decades-long OSCE tradition of holding all participating States accountable for meeting their human dimension commitments, my own country, of course, included.

Together, we sent a strong message to Russia and any others who would undermine OSCE's human dimension work: You will not succeed. No country escaped scrutiny for its human rights abuses. And we remain committed to holding a human dimension implementation meeting every year.

What we have done together in Warsaw is a vital contribution to achieving a larger goal: defending and reestablishing the security of the OSCE region based on a comprehensive approach. Security among states is inseparable from respect for the dignity and rights of the people who live within those states. The Helsinki Final Act enshrined that truth, and all of us are living witnesses to it. In every session of the conference, we heard deeply moving, eyewitness accounts that underscored precisely this unbreakable link.

The U.S. Delegation's meetings in Warsaw with members of civil society highlighted widespread demand for accountability for Russia's atrocities, including war crimes, in Ukraine and justice for Ukrainians. ODIHR's support for the two Moscow Mechanism invocations and ODIHR's own human rights monitoring initiative are a critical part of this process. ODIHR has a long, respected history of promoting and supporting human rights, and it is vital that it make use of that expertise to document human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law, including all possible war crimes and other atrocities, associated with Russia's war on Ukraine and its people. As I will refer in a following agenda item, there has been a new Human Rights Watch report again in very bone chilling terms details instances of rape, torture, mutilation, and other gross violations of human rights by the Russian Federation. Those individuals who are responsible for these crimes must and will be held accountable – at all levels. And I believe this has to be our number one priority. Full stop.

The United States is also proud to support your efforts across the OSCE region to strengthen democratic institutions; election processes and the rule of law; to end torture; and promote gender equality and tolerance. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. ODIHR's world-renowned election observation methodology remains one of the OSCE's greatest assets and we commend ODIHR for carrying out 14 missions across the OSCE region since last fall, including six, large-scale missions in Georgia, Serbia, Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, and Kazakhstan. The United States looks forward to receiving a mission for our upcoming midterm elections in November as you noted with slightly less participation, which is unfortunate.

The United States will continue to support a robust budget for ODIHR that advances OSCE principles and commitments, which are under greater threat now than ever before.

As Putin's missiles continue to fall on innocent civilians in Ukraine, we are reminded of the importance of human rights as an essential and integral component of our Organization's comprehensive approach to security and the indispensable role of your institution and OSCE in upholding international commitments. The United States will continue to be a stalwart supporter and defender of ODIHR's mandate and its independence.

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