



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on the Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation

As delivered by Ambassador James S. Gilmore III
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 12, 2020

The United States commends our *Mediterranean as well as our Asian Partners for Cooperation* for progress in mirroring the principles and commitments of participating States, thereby extending the concept and benefits of comprehensive security as envisioned 45 years ago.

At the Milan Ministerial Council in 2018, we “reaffirmed the security of the OSCE area is inextricably linked to that of the Mediterranean region, as acknowledged in the *Helsinki Final Act*, and reiterated in the 2010 *Astana Commemorative Declaration* and in the 2014 *Ministerial Council Declaration on Co-operation with the Mediterranean Partners*.” Indeed, our conversation today in the Permanent Council is evidence of our inter-linked security, and our shared desire to strengthen cooperation.

We commend the incoming Swedish Chairmanship for its able stewardship of the *OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation Group* during this challenging year, including the successful virtual convening of the *Mediterranean Partners Conference* on November 3.

The fact that such a large number of high-level officials from both the OSCE participating States and the Mediterranean partner countries participated, demonstrates the value of this forum.

As we underscored in Milan, there are areas in which we can strengthen our cooperation in all three OSCE dimensions. We should set higher goals for improving border security and management; combatting trafficking in all its forms; countering terrorism; and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms. These are themes that have been emphasized today by the Representatives of the Mediterranean Partners who have spoken, and in fact we have common ground on many of these issues, including and especially terrorism, trafficking in persons and migration issues. We will always be supporting or carefully assessing proposals with respect to funding. It’s our goal of the United States to continue to strengthen these relationships in every way possible and to advance the common interest that we all have.

The theme of this year’s Mediterranean conference, “promoting security through sustainable development and economic growth,” with an emphasis on women’s economic empowerment, was particularly pertinent as countries seek to recover from the devastating effects of the global pandemic. For our part, the United States works with all six OSCE Mediterranean Partners through the *U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative* (MEPI) that works with the governments and civil society in the region to achieve shared political, economic and stability objectives.

Last month, Secretary Pompeo, together with 31 world leaders, including OSCE Partners Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, launched the “*Call to Action for Women’s Economic Empowerment*,” to help reduce legislative barriers to women’s economic participation and to help women around the world lead the economic recovery in response to the pandemic.

In conclusion, please allow me to reiterate our support for the *Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation Group* and thank Sweden for its leadership. We look forward to working with next year’s incoming Chairmanship, Poland, as it guides our work in this Group also.

Thanks to Ambassador Funered and thank you, Madam Chairperson, for the opportunity to speak on this issue.

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