



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

# **Concerns About Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Freedom of Expression in Turkey**

As delivered by Deputy Political Counselor Darren Perdue  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
December 14, 2017

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The United States is concerned about a number of recent indefinite government bans on LGBTI events in several parts of Turkey, including film festivals and other public activities in Ankara and Istanbul. The motivations underlying these prohibitions remain unclear.

The United States strongly supports the rights of all individuals, including LGBTI persons, to assemble peacefully and to exercise freedom of expression. As we have expressed publicly and privately to the Turkish government on numerous occasions, curbs on freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, and other human rights and fundamental freedoms erode the foundations of democratic society. Turkey benefits from having more engaged voices, not fewer – even voices it may find controversial or uncomfortable to hear.

Mr. Chair, we would also like to remind all participating states of our international obligations and OSCE commitments to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all persons.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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