



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Ambassador Gyorgy Szabó, OSCE Project Coordinator in Uzbekistan

As delivered by Deputy Political Counselor Jennifer Bosworth
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 13, 2013

The United States welcomes to the Permanent Council the Project Coordinator in Uzbekistan, Ambassador Gyorgy Szabó. Ambassador, we thank you for your presentation and ongoing efforts to support Uzbekistan in fully implementing its OSCE commitments.

Over the course of the past year, your Project Office has implemented a number of projects across all three OSCE dimensions designed to assist the ongoing reform process in Uzbekistan. In the First Dimension, we commend your efforts to strengthen border security through the use of biometric passports. These documents are an important tool in combating many of the most pressing transnational threats in the OSCE region, including violent extremism, trafficking in human beings, and illicit trafficking in narcotics, weapons, and other dangerous materials. Your efforts to promote police reform by training instructors from the Police Academy have the potential for far-reaching impact. We encourage you to incorporate instruction on human rights law in your police reform activities wherever possible. The first-ever participation of representatives from Uzbekistan in the ODIHR trainings for election observers is also a welcome development.

It is apparent from your report, Mr. Ambassador, that your Second Dimension activities are guided by the principles and norms reaffirmed in the 2012 Ministerial Council Declaration on Good Governance. In particular, your work on combating money laundering and terrorism financing as well as your support to Uzbekistan's government in developing a national action plan to combat corruption serve to implement the goals of that Declaration. We commend you for these efforts. We also support your activities designed to promote environmental awareness, monitor environmental threats, and promote renewable energy sources.

My government sets a high priority on the Third Dimension. We welcome your coordination with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media to provide recommendations on draft laws on media development in Uzbekistan, as well as your efforts to publicize human rights norms and promote human rights law among the police. However, we believe that there is room for you to do more in the Third Dimension. We encourage you to identify projects designed to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedoms of expression, association, assembly, and religion. Your stated goal of maintaining balance among the three dimensions is laudable; we encourage you to ensure that your Third Dimension activities are as robust as those in the First and Second Dimensions.

Mr. Ambassador, I would also like to applaud your continued cooperation with the Secretariat and the OSCE's independent institutions. As your report highlights, the

Secretariat's Transnational Threats Department, the High Commissioner for National Minorities, the Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights are all important resources that the OSCE's field missions should take advantage of to advance their mandates. We encourage you to continue to involve these organizations in your future work.

Finally, we also commend your positive relationship with the Government of Uzbekistan. We view both the approval to hire two new national project officers and the new project agreement cycle as important fruits of that relationship. Both of these developments should allow you to be even more effective in the coming years.

The United States applauds the work of the Project Office in Uzbekistan across all three dimensions and looks forward to hearing reports of additional success in the future.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.