



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

### **Response to the Report by the Head of the OSCE Mission in Skopje**

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Katherine Brucker  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
May 22, 2025

Ambassador Wahl, dear Kilian, welcome back to the Permanent Council. Thank you for your leadership of the OSCE Mission in Skopje to adapt to North Macedonia's needs and advance its reform agenda through close cooperation with the government and engagement with civil society.

I would first like to offer our deepest condolences to those who lost loved ones in the deadly March 16th nightclub fire in Kochani. The injuries and loss of so many young lives in one community is a terrible tragedy. Our thoughts are with the victims and survivors and their families. We were pleased to see North Macedonia take quick action after the fire to investigate those whose actions reportedly created the conditions for this tragedy – officials who did not enforce building or fire codes and who signed off on licenses based on incomplete or false documents. The United States thus strongly supports the OSCE Mission's work with government agencies to combat corruption.

Ambassador Wahl, we would like to see more work to prioritize economic reforms that strengthen a free and fair market economy, including removal of trade barriers, and ensure foreign investments adhere to international best practices. We have seen how malign foreign investments pose a serious risk to national and economic sovereignty, so combating such investments is crucial. These efforts will help local investors while making North Macedonia a more attractive place for foreign direct investment.

We appreciate your work fostering security and law enforcement – from preventing small arms and light weapons trafficking to advancing criminal justice reform, reducing inter-ethnic tensions, and tackling illegal immigration including migrant smuggling. Your regional law enforcement collaboration increases the safety of land border crossings and improves international organized crime investigations.

We fully support your work with North Macedonia to strengthen its democracy so that it works for all citizens. This theme is especially important looking ahead to the 2025 local elections. Free and fair election processes, in which all citizens' voices have an equal chance to be heard, will help advance needed reforms.

Ambassador Wahl, many thanks to you and your team for your outstanding work to help North Macedonia deliver for its citizens. Unfortunately, this Mission faces significant operational difficulties due to severe financial constraints. We urge all participating States to join consensus to adopt a Unified Budget as soon as possible and put the organization on stable footing.

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