



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Report by the OSCE Project Coordinator in Uzbekistan

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Courtney Austrian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 9, 2023

Dear Mr. Ihm, thank you for your report and thank you as well for your leadership over the past year.

As your report noted, Ambassador Carpenter visited Uzbekistan in November 2022 alongside counterparts from the UK, Germany, and France. During that visit it was abundantly clear that Uzbekistan is committed to a strong partnership with the OSCE. And to that end, I hope your office will soon be fully staffed so that robust cooperation between the OSCE Project Coordinator and the Government of Uzbekistan across all three dimensions of security, as well as your engagement with civil society in Uzbekistan, can expand further.

In the meantime, your office's excellent work has produced tangible and commendable results. The risk of trafficking in human beings in the OSCE region has increased in recent years, and you are helping Uzbekistan strengthen its capacity to address this issue by holding the first ever anti-trafficking simulation exercise at the premises of the Prosecutor General's Academy. On a related note, your office's opening of a Support Center for Women in Tashkent to support women from vulnerable communities is a significant step, and if you have not already done so, I encourage you to exchange information with OSCE colleagues in Dushanbe, given the success of their Women's Resource Center program.

Your efforts to promote women's economic empowerment in recent years, as well as the introduction of sustainable agricultural practices in Uzbekistan to mitigate the impact of climate change, is also highly commendable.

We were encouraged to read in your report that your office has further strengthened cooperation between Uzbekistan and the OSCE's Representative on Freedom of the Media, and encourage you to continue to help facilitate this partnership to ensure that Uzbekistan can take advantage of the full range of OSCE tools as it seeks to fulfill its OSCE commitments on media freedom.

Your office's work on human rights, in particular training courses on international human rights for defense lawyers and workshops on protecting human rights while countering terrorism for police representatives, in cooperation with ODIHR, exemplifies the OSCE's ability to provide participating States with tangible support in fulfilling their OSCE commitments.

We greatly appreciate your vital work and solid cooperation with the Government of Uzbekistan, and look forward to continuing to support you. And please do share our appreciation with all of the OSCE staff in Uzbekistan.

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