



## United States Mission to the OSCE

# Response to the OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation with a Special Focus on “Strengthening Good Governance and Combating Corruption”

As delivered by Chargé d’Affaires, a.i. Courtney Austrian  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
July 22, 2021

The United States is a proud supporter of the OSCE’s *Partners for Cooperation*. Last week we had a chance to discuss the contributions of our *Mediterranean Partners* at this Permanent Council, and today we are pleased to review our collaboration with the OSCE’s *Asian Partners for Cooperation*. With 57 participating States, the OSCE is the world’s largest regional security organization, but we recognize the security of our region is intrinsically linked to the security of our neighbors.

The OSCE *Asian Partners for Cooperation* format gives participating States a chance to review and renew the ties linking Europe and Eurasia, by sharing perspectives and best practices in all three dimensions of security. In addition, several *Asian Partners* provide generous contributions to key extrabudgetary projects and activities, including the Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine and the Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe.

We are grateful for the excellent work of the 2021 *Asian Partners* Chair, Albania, in organizing meetings, seminars, and the upcoming annual conference. OSCE *Asian Partners* sessions drove home to participating States the importance of defending our shared interests and values including through efforts to ensure a Free and Open Indo-Pacific for all nations. The values that underpin a free and open Indo-Pacific region ensured security and prosperity for decades and continue to do so. OSCE participating States and *Partners for Cooperation* must collaborate to uphold these values and address non-traditional security threats, including grey zone coercion. Thoughtful discussions at *Asian Partners* meetings exposed the challenges facing our Partners and the risks these challenges pose to the security and prosperity of all OSCE participating States.

The *Asian Partners* addressed a range of other relevant topics as well. Earlier this month, the Albanian Chair co-hosted with Thailand an excellent discussion on Women’s Empowerment during a pandemic. We commend Thailand on its leadership in this area and look forward to the *Asian Partners* Conference, hosted by Thailand, as well as upcoming meetings on the situation on the Korean Peninsula and the intersection of the *Youth and Security* agenda on peacebuilding in Afghanistan. We further look forward to a broad discussion on the security situation in Afghanistan and the challenges facing the region, including counter-terrorism, border security, regional economic connectivity, and human rights including those of members of religious, ethnic and racial minorities, children, women, persons with disabilities, LGBTQI+ persons, and others.

Mr. Chair, our *Partners for Cooperation* also remind participating States the security of the OSCE region does not exist in a vacuum, and events outside the OSCE have significant consequences inside the region. At the 2010 *Astana Summit* Meeting we declared that “the security of the OSCE area is inextricably linked to that of adjacent areas, notably in the Mediterranean and in Asia,” and last year in Tirana we noted that “security in the OSCE area is strongly interlinked with that of the Asian region.”

Mr. Chair, our *Asian Partners for Cooperation* are at the forefront of some of the most serious challenges facing the world today. Japan, Korea, Afghanistan, Australia, and Thailand have a wealth of experience in a complicated and often dangerous part of the world—we should listen carefully to their accounts of their experiences addressing the challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, pandemics and post-pandemic economic recovery, energy security, armed conflict, maritime territorial disputes, disaster risk reduction, *Digital Freedom*, and an authoritarian People’s Republic of China—which borders five OSCE participating States. It is both appropriate and incumbent upon participating States and *Partners for Cooperation* to bring our collective insights, experiences, and expertise to bear on these timely and far-reaching concerns.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, the United States welcomes today’s statements from our *Asian Partners for Cooperation*. We look forward to continued collaboration to advance shared goals and meet common challenges, both regional and global.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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