



United States Mission to the OSCE
**Response to the Reports by the
Chairpersons of the
Economic and Environmental Committee
and of the Human Dimension Committee**

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Gary Robbins
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
January 23, 2014

We thank Ambassador Algayerova and Ambassador Kvile for their reports to the Permanent Council today, detailing their plans for their committees in the year ahead, and we welcome this opportunity to respond to their reports.

The United States expresses our appreciation to Ambassador Algayerova for her strong leadership of the Economic and Environmental Committee in 2013, and we look forward to another year with her at the head of our Second Dimension efforts. We are pleased with the committee work plan that has been developed for 2014, and look forward to the discussion topics that have been outlined. We continue to maintain that implementation of the 2012 Dublin Declaration on Good Governance should be the cornerstone of our work in the Second Dimension, and we are pleased to see that the first thematic committee meeting in March will discuss money laundering risks and the recovery of stolen assets, important components of the fight against corruption. It is our strong belief that combating corruption is particularly relevant to the OSCE's concept of comprehensive security. We should explore ways in which the OSCE institutions can build on the expertise they have developed in the area of anti-money laundering and asset recovery, and also how we can expand efforts into other aspects of anti-corruption.

The other thematic meetings scheduled throughout the year are important topics that can and should be discussed as a part of our collective Second Dimension responsibilities. It is vital that we have continuity in these discussions, and we are pleased to see interplay between thematic committee meetings and this year's Economic and Environmental Forum theme, "Responding to Environmental Challenges," as well as the two important Second Dimension Ministerial Decisions reached in Kyiv.

The OSCE's Second Dimension work must continue to increase. We continue to call for the OSCE, both here in Vienna and at its field operations, to expand its Second Dimension engagement with policymakers, civil society, and the business community. We will support Ambassador Algayerova, the Swiss Chairmanship, and the Secretariat staff and field personnel as they do so, and will work to engage U.S.-based civil society organizations and businesses in helping us all meet our Second Dimensions priorities. We likewise encourage other participating States to involve civil society in Second Dimension fora and field mission activities.

The Chair of the Human Dimension Committee (HDC), Ambassador Robert Kvile is a longtime friend to the OSCE and to all of us, and the U.S. looks forward to working closely with him in the Human Dimension Committee. We especially appreciate Ambassador Kvile's support for autonomous OSCE institutions, including ODIHR's election observation methodology as the international "gold standard," and the inclusion of civil society throughout the year in our Human Dimension work.

Ambassador Kvile has shared a balanced list of topics that should contribute to lively discussions in the Human Dimension Committee. The United States stands ready to discuss any Human Dimension topic, but we are especially eager to engage on fundamental freedoms and human rights, which appear at this moment to be under siege in some participating States. We are pleased to see media freedom among the main topics, and we hope the committee will continue the work we are close to completing on the safety of journalists, freedom of movement, and fundamental freedoms in the digital age. We also look forward to continuing the discussion of moving the HDIM to the spring.

We hope that in our HDC meetings we can group the topics for the briefings by the OSCE executive structures with those of the voluntary reports by participating States whenever possible. Joint work with other committees, for example with the Economic and Environment Committee on Business and Human Rights, will enhance our thinking on cross-dimensional issues. We urge Ambassador Kvile to draw upon resources like the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly on topics where it has done a great deal of work, like ethical codes for parliamentarians and women's political participation. Civil society is another resource that we should utilize with more regularity in the HDC, particularly as we focus on the implementation of our commitments.

We again thank Ambassador Algayerova and Ambassador Kvile along with their excellent staffs for their hard work on promoting and expanding the Second and Third Dimensions. These are not easy jobs, but they have our support for their plans.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.