



United States Mission to the OSCE
**Response to the President of the OSCE
Parliamentary Assembly,
H.E. João Soares**

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Carol Fuller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 19, 2009

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The United States warmly welcomes President Soares back to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his address today.

The Parliamentary Assembly continues to fulfill important roles in connecting the work we do here in Vienna with our respective countries' elected representatives, promoting accountability within OSCE's institutions, and addressing crucial concerns affecting the participating States through parliamentary dialogue.

We note the positive work being done by the Parliamentary Assembly across the region: to address protracted conflicts; to promote democratic governance, including election assistance to participating States; and to respond to new challenges in connection with migration, energy security and climate change.

We are proud of the fact that two of the PA's officers and two of its special representatives come from the United States. The PA has been a leader on important initiatives such as combating trafficking in human beings and in promoting cooperation on security concerns with the Mediterranean Partners. The Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, Senator Ben Cardin, is a Vice President of the PA. His Co-Chairman, U.S. Representative Alcee Hastings, is a former President of the Parliamentary Assembly and its current, very engaged, Special Representative on Mediterranean Affairs. And Representative Robert Aderholt serves as the Vice Chair of the Third Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions. Representative Chris Smith is the Parliamentary Assembly Special Representative on Trafficking in Human Beings. And I would like to note, although I cannot see him at the moment, the presence today of Secretary General Spencer Oliver, who is also an American.

The PA's ongoing work in the Caucasus, South-Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Eastern Europe is aimed at furthering security, human rights, and democratic governance.

Through its meetings, seminars, and special missions, the PA contributes to efforts to address critical concerns in the region by developing proposals relevant for consideration by the Ministerial Council. We urge the Permanent Council to consider adopting some of the specific commitments agreed upon during last July's Annual Meeting in Vilnius.

We also would like to underscore the importance of cooperation between the Parliamentary Assembly and the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in election observation activities. The participating States have given the two institutions mandates to

undertake election observation together, through somewhat different roles that we view as mutually reinforcing and complementary, and not in competition. We are pleased to note the improvement in cooperation during this past year, which helps ensure that OSCE's election work will continue to set the gold standard of election support in the world. The United States attaches great value to OSCE's election monitoring, which in our view is most effective when the PA and ODIHR work together.

We thank the Chair in Office for the tireless efforts to further this cooperation and build a true spirit of partnership between the two institutions, which we know is also supported by the U.S. Helsinki Commission.

We appreciate President Soares's support for the Corfu Process, as well as for "implementation of existing commitments and the refinement of instruments and rapid response mechanisms for future crisis situations."

Finally, we note President Soares's interest in an OSCE Summit next year. We would also note that the last time we had a summit in 1999, we had agreements, negotiated over a period of two years, on CFE, a Charter on European Security, and the Vienna Document. We look forward to working hard with all those in support of a summit to make enough progress in all three dimensions so that we have reason to consider a high-level meeting.

President Soares, we commend you and the Parliamentary Assembly for your contributions to advancing security, human rights, and democratic governance throughout the region.

Thank you Madam Chair.