



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the OSCE Economic and Environment Activities Coordinator Ambassador Vuk Žugić

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Harry R. Kamian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 1, 2018

Ambassador, the United States warmly welcomes you back to the Permanent Council and thanks you very much for your update today on the work of the OSCE's Office of Economic and Environmental Activities and your plan for 2018. We wish to commend you on the timely, balanced, forward-leaning, and inclusive approach that you continue to take in leading your office in these important activities, so thank you very much.

Ambassador, we welcome your office's alignment with the Italian Chairmanship's priorities for the Second Dimension in 2018, and in accordance with your mandate. These priorities reflect issues of common interest among OSCE participating States, specifically in improving transportation and trade, combating money laundering and terrorist financing, and on migration governance, energy security, disaster risk reduction, and related security challenges. We especially applaud your office's strong emphasis on anti-corruption and good governance. Where corruption is rampant and the rule of law is weak, it undermines government institutions and threatens global security and stability.

Ambassador, your statement today shows an understanding of the need to emphasize gender mainstreaming, strengthen cross-dimensionality, cooperation with field missions and other OSCE executive structures, and increased collaboration with Asian and Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation. This strategic approach ensures a better chance for lasting success and inclusive security across the region.

We appreciate your office's efforts to leverage limited resources and partnerships on the ground to promote success. Your work with the ENVSEC Initiative provides early warning support for disaster risk reduction efforts. We also welcome the support you mentioned, to provide expertise and technical support to address environmental risks and develop risk reduction and response measures with OSCE Field Operations, including the SMM. Your cooperation with the region's 60 Aarhus Centers promotes public awareness and government responsiveness on environmental issues of concern. In addition, your office's Handbook on Combating Corruption captures best practices and makes them accessible across the region. The innovative cooperation you described just now with regards to the University of Birmingham will strengthen the OSCE's implementation of past Ministerial decisions, while better informing stakeholders in new areas of cooperation, such as in digitalization. And we agree with your assessment that digitalization has the potential to be a priority and shape the agenda in the Economic and Environmental Dimension for years to come.

In closing, the United States shares your view that the OSCE's economic and environmental activities are vital elements of our comprehensive approach to security. Our support for your office in the form of extra-budgetary funding and seconded personnel are two concrete ways we can show the importance that we attach to these issues, and our willingness to engage and support you in the coming year. The issues that we face together are complex and they require efforts in all three OSCE dimensions to ensure economic growth and lasting security.

Thank you again, Ambassador, for your report and we look forward to continuing our excellent relationship and productive partnership with you and your team.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.