



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Response to Report by Head of OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje, Jose-Luis Herrero**

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Carol Fuller  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
June 24, 2010

The United States welcomes Ambassador Herrero back to the Permanent Council and thanks him and his staff for the informative and comprehensive report. We strongly support the OSCE Spillover Monitoring Mission to Skopje, and believe that it continues to play an important role in supporting Macedonia in its reform process.

The Republic of Macedonia deserves recognition for a number of achievements since your last report to the Permanent Council. Among these are the overall positive 2009 Progress Report from the European Commission, the EU's recommendation to open accession negotiations, and the EU's granting of visa-free travel. These are tangible indicators of the progress Macedonia has made in related reforms.

We commend the Mission for its efforts to stay focused on issues where the OSCE's assistance will be of the most benefit. The Mission's work to review the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA) is an excellent example of good cooperation between the Government of Macedonia, the OSCE, and other members of the international community represented in the Security Principals Group. We view continued implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement – both in letter and in spirit – as an ongoing process, not simply a box to be checked. The Strategic Plan developed for the Secretariat for the Implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement provides a good roadmap for making progress on the five key areas of the OFA identified as needing more effort.

The United States continues to view the Mission's work on Rule of Law issues as among its top priorities. Implementation of commitments regarding transparency and independence of the Judiciary is crucial. The Mission's 2009 analysis of the independence of the Judiciary suggested a number of areas where work is needed to improve independence. We have serious concerns about proactive efforts by the Executive to exert pressure on the Judiciary, and we encourage the OSCE to continue its work to help Macedonia address these issues.

We also place great store in the Mission's continued confidence-building work to deepen cooperation and mutual understanding between different political and ethnic communities in Macedonia, in the spirit of the Framework Agreement. Recent events on the Kosovo-Macedonia border remind us that we must not become complacent about inter-ethnic tensions. The governments of Macedonia and Kosovo responded quickly and responsibly, and while these incidents seem to be limited and contained, they underscore the need to promote ethnic harmony. The confidence building and monitoring activities carried out by the Mission, including through the Tetovo field office, remain relevant.

Ambassador Herrero, your Mission's programs in the areas of rule of law, police reform, good governance, and confidence building are making significant contributions to stability and progress in Macedonia. The United States continues to support the work of this Mission with our contributions of seconded staff and our engagement both here in Vienna and in Skopje. We thank your team for the hard work that has made it possible.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.