



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Annual Report on the Implementation of the OSCE Recruitment Policies presented by the Secretary General

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 27, 2013

I would like to thank the Secretary General and his team for the presentation on the implementation of OSCE recruitment policies in 2012.

The United States appreciates that the OSCE continuously strives to improve its recruitment policies and practices to ensure that they are transparent, merit-based, and unbiased. Attracting the best candidates for the Organization continues to be a shared priority, and we can see from the report that we have some challenges to address together to advance this priority, particularly in the area of secondments.

We note that the number of nominations for seconded positions is low, and we are concerned that difficult economic times have, in many cases, eliminated the ability of participating States to provide salaries for their secondees. As a result, the organization faces long vacancies when recruiting for high-level or specialized positions that require specific knowledge, education, and experience. The organization will not be able to sustain its level and quality of engagement without these expert staff, and it is incumbent on all of us to recognize this reality and help the OSCE prioritize its activities.

The United States welcomes the Secretariat's initiatives on ways to improve the secondment system, including by allowing direct application to the OSCE. We also need to consider ways to incentivize participating States to support their secondees with salaries and benefits. Experts require expert-level pay and Board and Lodging Allowances alone are not enough.

We do not see the same pressures on contracted positions, however, where compensation packages are generous and several hundred applicants apply for virtually every open position. We call on other participating States to join us in examining ways to minimize the disparities between the two categories of staff – seconded and contracted – while maintaining the organization's attractiveness as an employer and its affordability for participating States.

Additionally, the United States commends the OSCE for the continued attention on gender balance, and is pleased to see that there was an increase in the number of women who both applied and were successful in being hired for contracted positions in 2012. We agree that more does need to be done to increase the number of women at the middle and senior management levels, and in traditionally male dominated areas such as civilian police. The United States is proud that several of our senior secondees to the OSCE are women, including

the Head of Mission in Moldova, the Deputy Head of Mission in Serbia, the Senior Border Issues Advisor, and the Deputy Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. Until recently the head of the Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe was an American woman and we have several female police officers currently deployed with the Community Security Initiative in Kyrgyzstan. We expect the OSCE to continue to place emphasis on gender balance and to show results by hiring more women for top-level positions at the OSCE.

Finally, I would like to commend the Secretary General and his staff for continuing to think innovatively about all aspects of recruitment and retention of OSCE employees despite the need to keep costs in check. We recognize that people are vital to the success of the OSCE.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.