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United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President Ranko Krivokapic

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 31, 2013

We welcome President Krivokapic to the Permanent Council for the first time since his election at the Istanbul Annual Session. Your visit serves as a reminder that delegations can make better use of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's resources and experience. Open communication between the OSCE and the OSCE PA adds value to the work of both institutions. We must strive to ensure transparency in our work.

The United States is encouraged by the recent visits to Vienna by parliamentarians such as the Chair of the OSCE PA's Second Committee, Roza Aknazarova of Kyrgyzstan, who participated in the 2013 Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting on October 21. Likewise, we welcome enhanced cooperation between the Parliamentary Assembly's Third Committee and the OSCE Human Dimension Committee, including the October 22 visit of Third Committee leadership - Isabel Santos of Portugal, Mehmet Sevki Kulkuloglu of Turkey, and Gordana Comic of Serbia - to the Human Dimension Committee.

We commend the cooperation between the Parliamentary Assembly and ODIHR, including during the October 9 Presidential election in Azerbaijan and the October 27 Presidential election in Georgia, as well as in Albania's election last June. We were pleased to hear Third Committee Vice Chair Kulkuloglu state at HDIM that cooperation with ODIHR on elections had improved and that the 1997 MOU is "back in force." We have said many times that the OSCE PA and ODIHR complement each other in their strengths – the long-term presence and technical advice of ODIHR, and the high profile of parliamentarians with their practical experience as elected officials. Experience has shown that it is both useful and desirable for these institutions to work closely together on election observation missions.

The United States is fortunate in that our delegation and, more broadly, U.S. engagement in the OSCE, receives tremendous support from the United States Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, an independent agency whose Commissioners include members from both houses of our legislature and the Democratic and Republican political parties. We have found that working with our legislative colleagues is a force multiplier. We encourage the OSCE Secretariat and Institutions to work closely with the OSCE PA, and we look forward to continuing our work with you, President Krivokapic, and with the Parliamentary Assembly as a whole.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.