



United States Mission to the OSCE

Presentation of the 2015 Unified Budget Proposal

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 9, 2014

The United States welcomes the presentation of the 2015 Unified Budget Proposal (UBP) and thanks the Secretary General and all the fund managers for their hard work on this proposal.

The role of the OSCE as a major contributor to regional security and stability is more pronounced now than ever, as demonstrated by the role of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. Given events in Ukraine and ongoing challenges across the OSCE region, it is vital that we provide the OSCE with the necessary resources to carry out its mandate effectively, with the flexibility to respond to the fast-changing landscapes and requirements across all three dimensions in the OSCE space. To that end, Mr. Secretary General, we believe that the proposal you have presented provides a reasonable starting point for budget discussions.

We welcome the proposed increase in the UBP for the Project Coordinator in Ukraine (PCU). It is essential that the PCU be provided with adequate resources to be able to respond to the complex and demanding environment and in support of a democratic, secure, and prosperous Ukraine.

We are encouraged to see the proposed increase in funding to OSCE's independent institutions. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the High Commissioner on National Minorities have been at zero nominal growth for the past four years, and the Representative on Freedom of the Media, for the past two years, has experienced an overall funding reduction between three percent and ten percent in real terms. This level of funding is inadequate and unsustainable for the OSCE to meet its core obligations to participating States in advancing human rights and fundamental freedoms, tolerance, rule of law, media freedom, and election monitoring. We urge participating States not to politicize the budgets for these institutions, as they uphold commitments essential to our concept of comprehensive security.

We take special note of the inclusion of UNSCR 1540 programmatic work in this year's UBP, which is critical for the OSCE to sustain its work with the UN 1540 Committee and UNODA, and to meet its commitments under the decisions of the Forum for Security Cooperation.

We continue to see progress in the Balkans towards greater European and Euro-Atlantic integration and consolidation of democratic reforms, resulting in the handover of successful reform programs to international and local actors. At the same time, security and governance challenges continue to grow in Central Asia. We are therefore disappointed in the less-than-adequate increases in funding the field missions in Central Asia. The OSCE field missions should have the resources they need to support governments' efforts to improve their capacities to secure borders, promote economic security and good governance, and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We are especially disheartened that the Border Management Staff College was again excluded from the UBP. This institution is the OSCE's only forum for regional border security cooperation and exchange in Central Asia, with a proven track record for successfully training border security officials from participating States and Partners, including Afghanistan. Without stable financing, the sustainability of the Border Management Staff College and the OSCE's invaluable contribution to improving border security is at risk.

Finally, we remain concerned with the growing share of the budget going into the Secretariat. We encourage the Secretariat to continue to find ways to economize, particularly in Vienna, and to focus resources on programmatic front-line activities. We also note the proposed structural changes to the Secretariat. While we recognize that the OSCE needs a solid foundation to be able to achieve success in the field, we believe that the growth in the Secretariat is not sustainable.

The United States looks forward to working with Serbia as it takes the lead on budget negotiations for 2015, and discussions to reform the budget cycle in conjunction with the Helinski+40 process on improving the efficiency, effectiveness, and relevance of the OSCE in the modern security environment. We stand ready to work constructively to reach consensus on a budget that supports the mandate of the OSCE to respect, promote, and ensure security and stability across the OSCE space.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.