



United States Mission to the OSCE

Right of Reply to Russia On Improving Scientific and Technical Cooperation in Response to the Spread of the Coronavirus Pandemic

As delivered by Chargé d’Affaires Courtney Austrian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 11, 2021

We recognize the unprecedented global challenge posed by the pandemic for participating States and fully support efforts to coordinate a multilateral response. In our December 15, 2020 joint Statement we voiced our support for the role of the OSCE in “identifying and facilitating action by participating States to address the impact of the pandemic on our comprehensive security and assisting international efforts towards peace.” The statement also recognized “the primary responsibility of participating States in adopting and implementing responses to the pandemic specific to their domestic context.”

In the Statement, participating States also emphasized the “important contribution of independent, free and pluralistic media in disseminating accurate information and countering the spread of disinformation during the pandemic.”

It is unfortunate, therefore, that four Russian online platforms with ties to Russian intelligence services were determined to be spreading disinformation regarding non-Russian vaccines (including vaccines produced by Pfizer and Moderna). In doing so, Russia is irresponsibly jeopardizing global vaccine confidence and the health of people around the world by spreading disinformation about scientifically-demonstrated safe and effective vaccines.

Madam Chair, we share the goal of disseminating safe and effective vaccines as widely as possible in the OSCE area and around the world. It is for this reason that the United States is contributing two billion U.S. dollars to GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance in support of the COVAX Advance Market Commitment. We are committed to leveraging additional donor resources towards GAVI, including additional planned U.S. contributions totaling two billion U.S. dollars to Gavi through 2022. These contributions will make the United States the largest single donor for COVAX.

While we do not necessarily view steps such as those proposed by the Russian delegation as effective ways ahead at OSCE, we will continue working to find opportunities for cooperation in this critical area among participating States.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

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