



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement Welcoming OSCE Internet 2013 Conference

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
February 7, 2013

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States is looking forward to the Internet 2013 conference being hosted by OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Dunja Mijatovic from February 13-15. We commend Representative Mijatovic and her staff for their hard work on this major event, and we are pleased that civil society and private sector representatives from the United States will be participating.

My government remains convinced—to borrow an aphorism from Henry David Thoreau—that that government is best which governs the Internet least. This is the philosophy Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Baer and the U.S. delegation will advocate at the conference. We are pleased the conference will feature such important topics as freedom of expression and the multi-stakeholder approach to Internet governance, and we anticipate interesting discussions led by a diverse group of experts from across the OSCE region.

We continue to see the Internet and new connective technologies as the public square of the 21st century: a virtual place where real, longstanding, internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms are exercised. The United States and 47 other participating States have co-sponsored the Declaration on Fundamental Freedoms in the Digital Age, which affirms that OSCE commitments to human rights and fundamental freedoms apply equally online and offline and we invite all other participating States to join us in this effort.

The United States will also continue to advocate for the strengthening of commitments in the area of media freedom so as to better protect the online and offline exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms. We derive particular inspiration from the efforts of journalists and bloggers who courageously operate in an increasingly repressive and often physically dangerous environment in a number of participating States.

We are pleased that the Ukrainian Chairmanship has proposed a human dimension event on media freedom for 2013. At such an event we would intend to focus special attention on the need to protect journalists and bloggers from physical violence, intimidation and harassment.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.