



## United States Mission to the OSCE

### **Response to the Report of the Head of the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe, Valeriu Chiveri**

As delivered by Chargé d’Affaires Courtney Austrian  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
April 29, 2021

Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to welcome Ambassador Chiveri back to the Permanent Council and thank him for his report today. We are pleased to see the OSCE prioritize its work with Tajikistan, which Chairperson-in-Office Linde’s visit to Dushanbe earlier this month reinforced.

The United States very much welcomes the Programme Office’s work across all three OSCE dimensions. Unfortunately, the pandemic continues to constrain and impact every sphere of professional and private life, and— as noted in your Report—the Mission was also forced to adapt. We applaud your team's determination to fulfill its mandate amid these challenging circumstances and commend your commitment to maintaining a constructive relationship with Tajikistan through dialogue with governmental officials and civil society partners.

The ability of the Office to organize activities at 14 Women’s Resource Centers is particularly noteworthy. The United States has long supported the work of the Women’s Resource Centers in assisting domestic violence victims and enabling women’s independence through education and skills development. We were pleased to hear about the positive impact they are having in Tajikistan to counter increases in domestic violence during the pandemic. Being safe at home is a precondition for advancing the global *Women, Peace, and Security* agenda. I was wondering if you could tell us more about the OSCE's efforts to assist Tajikistan in both combating domestic violence and in implementing its WPS National Action Plan?

The United States strongly supports the work of the Border Management Staff College (BMSC) and is pleased to hear the latest Staff Courses brought together 91 border officials from 24 participating States and four Partners for Cooperation. The inclusion in the courses of gender equality components and successful gender mainstreaming in a traditionally male-dominated field is significant and welcome.

The United States supports Tajikistan’s efforts to implement a new *National Anti-Corruption Strategy* to serve as a pragmatic and results-oriented blueprint for combating corruption. We ask the Office to track and share updates on Tajikistan’s development and implementation of its national strategies and to identify areas where participating States can best engage and provide programmatic support.

The United States welcomes the OSCE’s commitment to address the vital human dimension of security in Tajikistan. We remain concerned over reports of mistreatment of prisoners accompanied by a practice of impunity that weakens investigations and prosecutions. In keeping with OSCE

Principles and Decisions, including most recently at the 2020 Tirana Ministerial meeting, we urge the government of Tajikistan to end these practices and hold those responsible to account.

Tajikistan's continued blocking of access to social media platforms, messaging applications, news sources, and the denial of accreditation to independent and foreign journalists constrain freedom of expression for the people of Tajikistan. We are confident ODIHR is ready to assist Tajikistan in bringing its practices into line with its OSCE commitments on human rights and democratic principles of government, in particular, reforming the country's electoral institutions, permitting political pluralism, and ensuring freedom of expression; to serve as a lasting foundation for genuinely free and fair elections.

Ambassador Chiveri, thank you again for your comprehensive Report. The United States remains a stalwart partner of Tajikistan and a strong supporter of the Programme Office in Dushanbe. Your work in all three OSCE dimensions contributes to the development of Tajikistan as well as regional security, objectives that the United States also seeks to advance in our bilateral relationship with the people and government of Tajikistan.

Thank you, Madam Chair.