



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement in Response to Russia on Sochi Olympics

As delivered by Political Counselor Christopher Robinson
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
January 30, 2014

I take the opportunity to return briefly to an issue raised last week by the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation—the XXII Olympic Winter Games to be held in Sochi from February 7-23. The United States thanks the Russian Federation for the statement and for its preparations for the Olympics, and we wish all countries and competitors a successful Games.

As our Russian colleague said, sport has a unifying potential, and the spirit of tolerance and respect for all participants and spectators that forms the foundation for Olympic competition should be used more widely to promote universal human rights. Furthermore, in this same vein we recall that as OSCE participating States we agree to uphold commitments to respect the fundamental freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, association, and belief. The Games remind us that in the OSCE space there is no room for discrimination, regardless of one's gender, race, ethnicity, or religion, or whether one is lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.

In the Olympic spirit of tolerance, respect, and mutual understanding, we encourage the Russian Federation to take advantage of the Sochi Games to demonstrate its commitment to uphold human rights and fundamental freedoms before the games begin, throughout the competition, and after the last medal has been awarded.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.