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United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement in Response to Walter Schwimmer, Secretary General of the Council of Europe

As delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 22, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We would also like to welcome Mr. Schwimmer back to the Permanent Council and to thank him for his very thoughtful and detailed remarks. His appearance here today underlines the importance of close cooperation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe.

Cooperation between these two organizations is based on principles of commonality to both organizations, such as the promotion of democracy, the respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Despite differences in membership and working methods, the OSCE and the Council of Europe have cooperated successfully on a number of endeavors, including in the fields of election monitoring and the fight against trafficking in human beings. Our experience has demonstrated that, particularly in regard to elections, the impact of the OSCE and the Council of Europe is greatly increased when they speak with one voice.

Modalities for cooperation between the OSCE and other international organizations, including the Council of Europe, have been set out in several documents, most importantly the Platform for Co-operative Security. However, we recognize that there may be a need to fine-tune the working relationship, on a non-hierarchical basis. In that respect, the United States takes note of the Norwegian initiative to develop a joint declaration on enhanced OSCE-Council of Europe cooperation for possible adoption in Sofia.

The Norwegian initiative should be kept in mind during the preparations for the third Council of Europe Summit, to be held in May of next year, which will, we are informed, discuss cooperation with the OSCE.

The United States sincerely hopes that the upcoming Summit will increase the ability and the resolve of the Council of Europe to support democracy, human rights and the rule of law – as it has done - in all of its member states.

We look forward to Norway as current chair of the Committee of Ministers to keep us apprised of developments in the Council, in particular as regards the preparations for the third Summit.

Finally, we would like to thank Mr. Schwimmer for his dedication to making the precept of “a Europe for all and by all” a reality. We wish you well in your future endeavors, Sir.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.