



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Response to the Report of the Head of Mission in Kosovo, Ambassador Werner Wnendt,**

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
July 26, 2007

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We welcome Ambassador Wnendt to the Permanent Council, and thank him for his comprehensive report.

The future status of Kosovo is one of the most significant issues facing the region and must be resolved soon. We had a candid discussion on this topic two weeks ago, when Serbian Foreign Minister Jeremic appeared before the Permanent Council. We agree with UN SYG Ban's assessment that delays in resolving Kosovo's status could negatively affect peace and undermine democratic reforms in Kosovo. We are willing to support an additional, time-limited period of intensive engagement with the parties in an effort to reach a common agreement, but absent any mutually-agreeable solution, we continue to believe the Ahtisaari proposal is the best way forward.

We support OMiK's continued role in Kosovo, and note that its extensive field network will help the international community monitor and report on issues such as decentralization, human rights compliance, and the safety and protection of minority communities. While it has not yet been decided when to hold new Assembly and municipal elections in Kosovo, we welcome OMiK's willingness and expertise to assist in this effort. We call upon all parties to conduct the elections in a free and fair manner, and encourage Serbia to support the participation of local Serb representatives.

Following status, we expect the Mission to continue to perform many of the same institution-building activities that have characterized its mandate for the past eight years. The Mission should continue to review its presence in light of changing circumstances on the ground, and coordinate its activities with the international civilian presence and terms of a status settlement.

We have a common goal - a Kosovo that is viable and stable; where members of all communities can live a dignified, safe and economically sustainable life; and where those who today are still displaced can return to their homes with safety.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.