



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE, Foreign Minister of Ukraine, H.E. Leonid Kozhara

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
January 17, 2013

The United States warmly welcomes you, Foreign Minister Kozhara, to the Permanent Council as our Chairman-in-Office for 2013. We thank you for your presentation of your priorities and commend your country's commitment to the OSCE. You can count on the support of our country in advancing your country's aspirations this year, and we also agree with you that we need to make an agreement on our budget for 2013 an urgent priority.

As we look ahead to your Chairmanship and the start of the Helsinki +40 process, we should recall that human dignity and democracy, justice and tolerance, prosperity and peace are all at the core of the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security. Unfortunately, these values are increasingly under threat in the OSCE space. We must work with renewed determination to build our common security on the basis of these OSCE principles and strive for a region in which the use of force is unthinkable, human rights and fundamental freedoms are fully respected, and cooperation is the norm.

The United States shares Ukraine's view that promotion of full implementation by all participating States of all our commitments in the human dimension must be a top priority. As we agreed in Astana, the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms is our first responsibility, and the implementation of commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension is of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States. Over the past several years, however, human rights and fundamental freedoms have increasingly come under attack, and in Dublin, for the second year in a row, we were unable to reach consensus on any decisions that reaffirm our commitments in the human dimension. We look forward to Ukraine's leadership of the Organization and the Helsinki +40 process to restore the OSCE's human dimension to its rightful place at the center of our concept of comprehensive security and to lead this effort to fully implement our commitments. We also applaud your recognition of the importance of strengthening the involvement of civil society in these efforts and in the work of the OSCE more broadly.

We welcome the Ukrainian Chairmanship's focus on tolerance and youth and support your proposal to hold an OSCE event on this topic soon. At a time when our region has witnessed a rise in racism, xenophobia, and hate crimes targeting migrants, Roma, Jews, other ethnic and religious minorities, LGBT persons, and other vulnerable populations, the OSCE must strengthen its efforts and capacity to protect the vulnerable. Educating our young people against prejudice and hatred is an essential element in effectively combating racism, xenophobia and hate crimes. Such a focus provides the opportunity to look at institutional forms of discrimination such as segregated education as well as such prevalent manifestations of discrimination as bullying. Promoting access to and a safe space for human rights issues in education can help foster a culture of tolerance and respect among

our youth, an important step towards a brighter future for our community. Political leaders have a weighty responsibility to set a good example for our youth on issues of tolerance; regrettably, too many are failing the test of leadership.

We applaud your intent to continue the OSCE's focus on media freedom. In that context, we recall that the United States is one of forty-eight co-sponsors of the Fundamental Freedoms in the Digital Age declaration. This declaration contains no new commitments; it merely reaffirms that our commitments to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms apply whether they are exercised in the real or the virtual world – online or offline. It remains deeply troubling that some participating States falsely assert that the emergence of a new technology, such as the Internet, can abrogate or diminish fundamental freedoms long recognized by the international community and enshrined in international law. We will continue to work to advance the draft declaration this year.

We appreciate your clear expressions of support for the OSCE's Institutions, including the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the High Commissioner for National Minorities, and the Representative on Freedom of the Media as well as the organization's field operations. As Minister Gryshchenko said in Dublin, these institutions are the “guardians of our organization's values.” We look forward to working with you to ensure the independence and vitality of these crucial institutions. In particular, we must stress the importance of protecting the value of ODIHR's rightly respected standards for election observation. In this regard we also encourage you to deepen and enhance our cooperation with the Parliamentary Assembly in their election efforts.

We commend your cross-dimensional focus on combating trafficking in human beings and your intentions to address the most prevalent forms of human trafficking across the OSCE space – labor and sex trafficking. We also applaud the Chairmanship's enhanced focus on victim support. The 2011 Vilnius Declaration was an important cross-dimensional achievement confirming our shared commitment to combating human trafficking and strengthening support for the Special Representative and Coordinator Maria Grazia Giammarinaro. Ms. Giammarinaro's initiatives, such as trainings on investigating money laundering and preventing domestic servitude, demonstrate how trafficking in human beings affects all the OSCE dimensions - the law enforcement element in the Security Dimension, the good governance in the Economic Dimension, and the human rights in the Human Dimension – and how a successful response must rely on cross-dimensional efforts. We look to her office for guidance to improve our commitments through an annex to the 2004 Trafficking Action Plan.

We also support your commitment to gender equality and reiterate our support for ongoing efforts to leverage UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security, as well as our support to address the prevalent issues of gender-based violence across the region. We welcome the positive momentum on these issues established last year and embrace opportunities to build further on such efforts through upcoming opportunities with our Partners for Cooperation.

The protracted conflicts continue to present challenges to our common security. We commend the appointment of Ambassador Deshchytsia as the Special Representative of the Chairman-in-Office to bring added focus to these issues. In particular, we welcome your intention to bring special attention to the Transnistria conflict in Moldova, building on the OSCE's past contributions and looking for new ways to boost confidence between parties to the conflict. The approval at Dublin of the Ministerial declaration on the Transnistrian

conflict underscores that we have an opportunity to make tangible progress towards resolving this protracted conflict. We must also continue to work toward restoring a meaningful OSCE presence in Georgia, while continuing to seek creative ways to achieve concrete improvements in the security and humanitarian situation there. Similarly, we should continue to work toward the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, under the auspices of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs. In addition to work on the individual protracted conflicts, we also would like to see increased efforts to improve the ability of the OSCE to respond promptly to situations of crisis or tension so that the international community can be fully and accurately apprised of the facts on the ground.

In the economic and environmental dimension, we support your focus on the environmental impact of the energy industry. We also encourage you to develop a strategy that will make operational the Dublin Ministerial Declaration on Good Governance and Combating Corruption, Money-Laundering, and the Financing of Terrorism. The OSCE is well placed to promote progress on transparency in the energy industry. Pursuing good governance should underpin all second dimension discussions, as well as discussions of transnational threats (TNT) initiatives in the first dimension, regardless of specific issues.

We welcome your intention to continue work in the Security Dimension by addressing transnational threats, such as organized crime, cyber security, narcotics trafficking, and terrorism. The adoption of decisions last year consolidating and strengthening the OSCE's work in these areas clearly demonstrates a shared sense of the common threat and the need for the OSCE to provide a forum for discussion and a platform to engage in joint action on these issues. We should continue the progress of the TNT Ministerial decision and develop concrete counter-terrorism and TNT initiatives this year. On cyber security, we were disappointed that one participating State blocked consensus on an initial set of transparency confidence-building measures, and we therefore welcome your support for continued work on this critical issue.

The United States supports the Chairmanship's initiative to update the 1994 OSCE Principles Governing Non-Proliferation and pledges our close cooperation to ensure a success for your efforts in this area. Similarly, we welcome your intention to promote greater military stability, transparency, and predictability within the existing mechanisms envisioned in the Forum for Security and Cooperation. We agree that Conventional Arms Control and Confidence and Security Building Mechanisms are core elements of the OSCE's concept of comprehensive, equitable, and indivisible security and we look forward to further dialogue on these important issues.

Finally, the United States reaffirms the importance of the role the OSCE has played on Afghanistan and applauds your leadership on this issue. Since 2007, the OSCE has supported a number of initiatives focused on border security and transnational threats with Afghanistan and its neighbors in light of the transition of full security responsibility from International Security Assistance Forces to Afghan National Security Forces by the end of 2014. These OSCE projects have focused on increasing technical capacities and people-to-people linkages between neighboring Central Asian States. We believe the OSCE has much to offer our partners in Central Asia, including improved border management, countering corruption, promoting democratic values and human rights, and reducing illicit trafficking to promote trade and economic development. We urge the speedy development and implementation of activities that build capacity and help meet the needs of our partners in this region.

Secretary Clinton stated in Dublin, “As we approach the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, this is a time for the OSCE to once again take up the mantle of leadership, push forward the frontiers of human rights and dignity, and reaffirm the values and principles that have guided this organization ever since its founding.” The United States continues to believe in the great promise of Helsinki and is committed to working with our partners to encourage concrete action in the year ahead.

In conclusion, Foreign Minister Kozhara, we wish you and your very able team here in Vienna the greatest success in the year ahead.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.