



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Report by OSCE Secretary General Helga Schmid on OSCE Response to the Implications of Afghanistan for the OSCE Region (RIAOR)

As delivered by Political Counselor Elisabeth Rosenstock-Siller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 2, 2022

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Madam Secretary General,

Thank you for updating the Permanent Council on how the OSCE is responding to the humanitarian, security and political situation emanating from Afghanistan. Clearly the events of last summer continue to have direct implications for the region and for all OSCE participating States; it is therefore essential that we remain engaged in ensuring the OSCE is maximizing its positive impact by leveraging its existing tools to help address this challenge.

Participating States from Central Asia, and in particular those bordering Afghanistan, have on many occasions, including again today, expressed concerns regarding the evolving regional challenges of violent extremism, terrorism, drug trafficking, trafficking in persons, and refugee flows. We share those concerns and will continue our close coordination with our Central Asian partners to support their sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity, stability, and prosperity. A well-connected, secure, and prosperous Central Asia benefits the entire OSCE community.

Madam Secretary General,

The enduring contribution of the OSCE in building a more stable, democratic, and rights-respecting environment in the region is exemplified by the presence of our field operations in each of the five Central Asian participating States, and the important work they do every day on issues from women's rights to security sector reform. We also want to commend the success of the OSCE Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe, which continues to deliver on its mandate to provide specialized training for border security agencies from across Central Asia and the wider OSCE region. The need for such specialized, quality training will only increase in the coming years.

We take note of the carefully considered proposals in the report you have outlined today, and the resource requirements necessary to carry them out. We especially appreciate the proposal's dual approach –addressing current challenges and simultaneously seeking to capitalize on opportunities.

The strong focus on mitigating risks through strategic investments in border management and security and addressing trafficking of weapons and persons clearly addresses immediate and enduring concerns.

We also strongly support the OSCE's work with communities who may be especially vulnerable under current circumstances. I am therefore pleased to announce U.S. support to the next phase of the Program Office in Dushanbe's project to support Women's Resource Centers throughout Tajikistan.

Madam Secretary General,

Delivering on the promise of the proposed activities will require close and continuing coordination among OSCE executive structures, field missions and host countries. We are grateful for your leadership in ensuring the OSCE's unique contributions deliver the greatest value possible in addressing security challenges in the region. Please be assured of our continued support.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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