



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on the OSCE and the EU, in response to Irish Minister for European Affairs Mr. Dick Roche

As delivered by Deputy Representative Douglas Davidson
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
January 22, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is both an honor and a pleasure to welcome Minister Roche to the Permanent Council today and to hear the priorities of the Irish Presidency of the European Union. The United States, at least in our view, maintains an excellent working relationship with the EU here in Vienna, thanks, in large part, to the openness and cooperative spirit of the delegations leading the EU. We pledge our continued cooperation with your most excellent Permanent Representative here, Ambassador Moran, and his delegation for the next six months.

The OSCE provides a unique opportunity for the United States and the European Union to work together. This is not to say that we do not occasionally have differing views on issues of concern. We do. But the fact that the U.S. and the EU are almost always in agreement on the direction and purpose of the OSCE and its activities is a testament to the strength and the endurance of the Helsinki principles.

The priorities and actions of the OSCE and the European Union are closely linked, not only because of the growing number of EU members within the OSCE, but also because these organizations share a common aim – the security and stability of the wider European region. We welcome the opportunity to continue our close coordination with the greatly expanded European Union within the OSCE and in other fora in order to ensure that the Helsinki principles take firmer root in the EU's "new neighbors."

The OSCE and the European Union should continue working together, along with the countries of the region, to bring lasting peace, security and economic prosperity to the Balkans. Cooperation on police training, border management, and the drafting of legislation has been successful and should continue.

We agree with Minister Roche the OSCE and the EU can aid in bringing about solutions to the "frozen conflicts" in Georgia, Moldova, and Nagorno-Karabakh. The United States is committed to the resolution of these conflicts and will work actively with others toward this aim. On a related point, I would add that the United States and the members of the EU have a common interest in building regional security and stability through steps like full implementation of the Istanbul commitments relating to Georgia and Moldova. This is a goal we all share.

In Central Asia and elsewhere in Eurasia, there is potential for more cooperation between the OSCE and the EU. We know the European Union shares our concern that the upcoming Ukrainian Presidential election be free and fair. We look forward to working with the EU and all OSCE participating States on supporting the new Georgian government's political and economic reform agenda. Indeed, we can and should work together to promote the full realization of OSCE principles relating to human rights and democratic institutions and to support the OSCE's election observer work throughout this region.

There are also opportunities for joint OSCE-EU projects in Central Asia in the economic and environmental dimension, to strengthen the underlying institutions that make market economies function and prosper.

Mr. Chairman, our fruitful cooperation extends to other fields, as well, including improving the security of borders, stopping the trafficking of human beings and combating terrorism. While not traditionally a focus of the OSCE, HIV/AIDs poses a growing threat to all participating States. We hope that the upcoming HIV/AIDs conference in Dublin will lead to greater cooperation between the EU and OSCE participating States in preventing the spread of this scourge.

We must also work together to fight against other scourges, especially anti-Semitism, racism, xenophobia and discrimination, and we, therefore, welcome the EU's involvement in the upcoming conferences in Berlin and Brussels on these subjects, as well as the special event to be held in Paris on the relationship between propaganda on the internet and hate crimes. It is only through common and coordinated action that we can effectively tackle these and other issues - issues that are of concern to all of our governments and all of our fellow citizens.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, we congratulate Ireland on its assumption of the Presidency of the European Union, and we extend our thanks to Minister Roche for his appearance before the Permanent Council today. We look forward to continuing close cooperation between the United States and the EU, as we strive to strengthen our Trans-Atlantic relationship and to guarantee peace throughout the OSCE region.

Thank you very much.