



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Montenegro Head of Mission Paraschiva Badescu

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 25, 2010

Welcome back to the Permanent Council, Ambassador Badescu, and thank you for the informative report.

Since your address to the PC in March last year Montenegro has continued along the path of reform and toward its goal of Euro-Atlantic integration. Notable landmarks include visa liberalization with EU Schengen states, and an invitation to join NATO's Membership Action Plan (MAP) process. Montenegro plays a constructive role in the region, including chairing a number of regional initiatives this year and engaging in bilateral cooperation with its neighbors on key issues. The March 2009 Parliamentary elections were assessed positively overall by international observers, including the OSCE.

During this time the OSCE Mission has made key contributions in areas where challenges remain, and this work should continue as needed. The Mission's work in Police Affairs is helping to boost needed strategic and management capacity. Your report also highlights the need to increase the capacity to fight drug-related crime and to combat organized crime and corruption.

The mission is doing important work aimed at strengthening rule of law. We note your mention of the Ministry of Justice's work to analyze the state of the court and the prosecutorial network as a positive initiative. The mission's work on court monitoring is also a valuable contribution, and it should keep up its important activity in this and other issues related to rule of law.

Trafficking in persons is another area where the mission's assistance is valuable. Montenegro has made significant efforts on anti-trafficking, including most recently hosting a regional meeting of anti-trafficking coordinators last month. The mission's work on this issue should continue.

Ambassador, we thank you and your staff for your hard work. Montenegro has made significant progress, and the OSCE mission has made important contributions to this progress. More remains to be done, and challenges will likely be amplified by the effects of the financial crisis, but we are optimistic that this progress will continue.

As this is your last appearance at the PC, we also take the opportunity to thank you for your hard work and wish you success in your future endeavors.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.