



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Nils Muižnieks

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
February 27, 2014

Commissioner Muižnieks, we warmly welcome you to the Permanent Council and thank you for your presentation, particularly the detail that you went into on a variety of cases. The exchange of information between the OSCE and the Council of Europe is invaluable and helps ensure that activities of the two organizations complement each other.

The United States values the attention your office brings to the work and plight of human rights defenders in the OSCE space. These are courageous individuals, and their work is vitally important. We welcome the engagement between your office and ODIHR with regard to their situation and tools to help ensure their protection.

Similarly, we welcome exchanges and collaboration between your office and the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media. The safety of journalists and the exercise by all of fundamental freedoms in the digital age must be protected. We also welcome cooperation between your office and the High Commissioner on National Minorities, and we value the role both organizations play in preventing ethnic conflict.

The United States appreciates your work on strengthening the rule of law and judicial independence and impartiality. In describing the pressures judicial officials face, as well as serious delays in judicial processes, your report highlights pressing challenges to the rule of law in some participating States. We also welcome the work of your office in addressing police misconduct and bringing attention to human rights violations by law enforcement.

Finally, the United States shares your deep concern over the rise of intolerance and discrimination in the OSCE space. It is unacceptable that individuals face persecution due to their religion or belief, gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, or disability. We welcome the attention your office helps bring to the often horrific conditions that Roma and Sinti endure, as well as to the treatment of migrants and members of minorities in certain participating States. The need for a coordinated effort by the OSCE and the Council of Europe to counter this tide of intolerance is critical to ensuring comprehensive security throughout the OSCE region.

Commissioner Muižnieks, we thank you again for your report and wish you every success in your important efforts.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.