



United States Mission to the OSCE **Point of Order: NGO Access to the Review Conference**

As delivered by Ambassador Michael Guest
OSCE Review Conference
October 5, 2010

Moderator, Madam Chairwoman,

I would like to make a point of order.

The Kazakhstani Chairmanship asserted this morning that the rule for NGO participation in the Review Conference differs in substance from that for the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting based on PC Decision 952. This simply is not accurate. There is only one rule governing NGO participation in all OSCE meetings. That rule is Chapter IV, paragraph 16 of the Helsinki Document 1992, under which participation of NGOs can only be denied to “persons or organizations which resort to the use of violence or publicly condone terrorism or the use of violence.”

Per Decision 952, which deals with modalities of the Review Conference and which the Chairmanship cited this morning, if and when a question is raised under Chapter IV, paragraph 16 of the Helsinki Document 1992, a determination of whether that NGO meets this standard is made after consultations by the Secretary General with interested participating States. There is no reason to suggest that consultations by the Secretary General be held on any basis other than the question of whether a specific NGO meets these conditions of access. The Chairmanship’s statement this morning would suggest otherwise, i.e., that should any participating State object to an NGO for any reason whatsoever, the Chairmanship would not register that NGO. We cannot agree to such a drastic revision of our agreed rules. As we have noted, neither of the NGOs in question breaches the provision of Helsinki 1992. The consultative process therefore cannot lead to a conclusion that is not in keeping with the agreed grounds on which decisions of NGO access are granted or denied.

The Chairmanship has suggested that this issue is with the Secretary General. He, of course, in essence works for the Chairmanship. We note that Decision 952 does not specifically vest the Secretary General with the authority – long held by the Chair-in-Office – to make this decision. It is the responsibility of the Chairmanship to implement properly OSCE decisions and rules. The

Chairmanship must step up and take responsibility, and we ask that it do so without further delay. Consultations regarding NGO registration for this meeting have been going on for nearly a month, and there is no excuse for further delay.

In this vein, we were surprised at the suggestion that, in order to express views on this subject, the Chairmanship-in-Office would have to declare itself an interested party. The Chairmanship, by definition, is an interested party in exercising the leadership we expect of it in carrying out its duties of upholding previously agreed OSCE procedures.

The issue we raise is one of leadership, responsibility, and the effective stewardship of this body. At the Madrid Ministerial, Kazakhstan promised that, and I quote, "*As an OSCE Chairman we shall stand for the compliance with the fundamental principles of open NGOs' participation in the OSCE events in accordance with the Helsinki document of 1992 and Budapest document of 1994.*" We call on the Chairmanship to live up to this promise.

Thank you, Mr. Moderator, Madam Chairwoman.