

Original: ENGLISH



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Address by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland Eamon Gilmore

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 22, 2011

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

As a proud son of Ireland I am pleased to welcome you on behalf of the United States to the Permanent Council Tánaiste Gilmore. We look forward to working with you as Ireland prepares to assume the Chairmanship in 2012, and as you continue to work closely with Lithuania as part of the OSCE Troika. We have been impressed with your early preparations, and appreciate your clear commitment to the OSCE's comprehensive and cross-dimensional approach to security.

As you noted in your remarks, the OSCE is a uniquely comprehensive platform for regional cooperation. Our shared concept of security as cross-dimensional is the foundation of the OSCE, and makes this organization our best platform for political dialogue on a range of issues, including both current and newly emerging security-related issues in Europe. As you note, Tánaiste, the OSCE faces numerous challenges, and we all must work to develop joint responses.

We welcome your proposal to prioritize issues within the Human Dimension. The United States has long made clear that the OSCE's work in the Human Dimension is a signal priority and one where implementation of commitments underscores the rest of the work this organization does. Our core objective remains to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, the rights of individuals belonging to religious and ethnic minorities, and the rule of law, and to combat intolerance and discrimination. We must continue to advance these values and ensure the full implementation of our common commitments. We must address negative developments, such as growing restrictions on freedom of association and assembly and freedom of religion, as well as growing xenophobia, and strive to protect and advance respect for all fundamental rights and freedoms across the OSCE region. We welcome Ireland's leadership on these issues.

We note Ireland's proposed focus on freedom of the media; an issue the United States also considers a priority for the OSCE. As you are probably aware, the OSCE's Representative on Freedom of the Media Dunja Mijatovic will give her regular report to this Council tomorrow. She will highlight some areas of cooperation, but also troubling trends regarding freedom of expression within the OSCE region. We will support the Irish Chairmanship in your efforts to continue the work of the Lithuanian chair in strengthening freedom of the media, including digital media, in the OSCE.

In addition to the Human Dimension, the OSCE continues to play an important role in arms control and conflict prevention, and we will appreciate continued leadership from the Chair in

Office in these areas, as well. Like you, the United States remains firmly committed to resolving the impasse on the Conventional Forces in Europe treaty. We also share your hope that Ireland can bring to bear within the OSCE its experience in conflict resolution. We believe the protracted conflicts in Georgia, Moldova, and Nagorno-Karabakh are among the most pressing challenges the OSCE faces today. Political will and concerted action are key to resolving these conflicts; we urge all parties to work toward peaceful, long-term and comprehensive settlements. In this context, we reiterate our firm belief that a meaningful international presence throughout Georgia, to include the OSCE and other international actors, can play a valuable role in conflict resolution.

Like you, Tánaiste, we believe that the OSCE can play a critical role in combating transnational threats, including trafficking in human beings, weapons and drug smuggling, organized crime, and terrorism. These are complex threats that ignore borders, and make joint action and regional cooperation absolutely essential. The OSCE is already active in these areas, but we can and should do more, particularly to help Afghanistan. We believe that the OSCE should expand existing border security projects in Central Asia, and should work regionally and with other international partners to build law enforcement capacity and tackle critical security threats.

Tánaiste, the United States looks forward to continued close cooperation with Ireland, both within the OSCE and bilaterally, and looks forward to Ireland's strong and effective leadership in 2012. You can count on our full support.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.