



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Right of Reply: Russian Federation Statement on Adoptions in the United States**

As delivered by Gary Robbins, Deputy Chief of Mission  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
February 9, 2012

The United States would like to take this opportunity to respond to the esteemed Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, who last week commented on the treatment of Russian children adopted in the United States. We extend our deepest sympathy for the loss of the adopted children who were both Russian and American citizens. We understand and share the interest of our Russian colleagues in the welfare of Russian children adopted by U.S. citizens. The United States takes the safety and security of children adopted by U.S. parents very seriously and we strongly condemn any type of abuse of children.

We take this opportunity now to reiterate the agreements in place to safeguard Russian children adopted by U.S. families.

In 2011, 962 of the 9,319 inter-country adoptions to the United States came from the Russian Federation. In recognition of the magnitude of U.S.-Russia adoptions, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov signed a bilateral adoptions agreement on July 13, 2011.

This Agreement provides safeguards that will better protect the welfare and interests of children and all parties involved in inter-country adoptions. Under the Agreement, only adoption agencies authorized by the Russian government may operate in Russia and provide services in adoptions covered by the Agreement, except in the case of an adoption of a child by his or her relatives.

With this new Agreement, independent adoptions from Russia will cease, and our governments can create a framework for inter-country adoptions between the United States and Russia. The Agreement also includes provisions designed to improve post-adoption reporting and monitoring and to ensure that prospective adoptive parents receive more complete information about adoptive children's social and medical histories and anticipated needs.

The United States remains committed to working with the Russian Federation on implementing the provisions set forth in this Agreement as soon as it enters into force. As Secretary Clinton emphasized to Foreign Minister Lavrov in Munich last week, it is our hope that the Russian State Duma will soon ratify the Agreement.

In the same vein, we urge the Russian State Duma to ratify the Hague Adoption Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Inter-Country Adoption (Hague

Adoption Convention). The Hague Adoption Convention applies to all adoptions between Convention countries and aims to prevent the abduction, sale of, and traffic in children, and it works to ensure that inter-country adoptions are in the best interests of children.

Unresolved cases of parental child abduction adversely affect families throughout the OSCE region. Abduction harms the child no matter what the nationality, tearing the child from the loving care of a mother or a father. We must do everything we can to prevent this from happening, and we look forward to working with participating States on these issues.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.