



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Chairman of the Eurasian Economic Commission Tigran Sargsyan

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Harry R. Kamian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 19, 2017

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The United States warmly welcomes Chairman Sargsyan to the Permanent Council. Thank you for your remarks, Mr. Chairman.

There is broad interest within our Organization to increase economic connectivity among OSCE participating States. Working together, participating States, their Partners for Cooperation, field missions, and the OSCE Border Management Staff College all play an important part in removing barriers to cross-border cooperation, supporting trade facilitation and customs cooperation, and improving the regional investment climate. By working together to achieve these goals, we can effectively use the OSCE as a platform to strengthen cooperation, reduce tensions, and improve security and stability.

The interest of participating States in focusing the OSCE in these areas was confirmed at last year's Hamburg Ministerial, as all 57 participating States supported the Ministerial Decision on Strengthening Good Governance and Promoting Connectivity. Reflecting the view held by most participating States that the OSCE's Economic and Environmental Dimension holds untapped potential, this Ministerial Decision outlined an ambitious program to forge closer economic ties and greater connectivity in the OSCE region.

Mr. Chair, while the United States supports this approach, the concept of a common, integrated economic area is something altogether different. Any discussion of the Astana 2010 vision of a single, integrated economic zone must first start with agreement on a fundamental set of values. Those values require that participants respect each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, the rule of law, and the rules-based international system that we have all committed to uphold. Clearly, these elements do not exist today among all participating States. In fact, in the OSCE today, one participating State in particular clearly has violated the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its neighbors, and others disregard principles and commitments regarding human rights and fundamental freedoms. The OSCE's comprehensive approach to security requires participating States to fulfill their commitments in all three dimensions.

Mr. Chair, we look forward to continuing our close partnership with the Office of the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, OSCE field missions, and partners in exploring how we can more effectively implement the range of activities outlined by the Ministerial Decision on Strengthening Good Governance and Promoting Connectivity.

In closing, let me thank you again, Chairman Sargsyan, for being here today and sharing your thoughts.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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