



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

### **Statement in Response to Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Albania, H.E. Edmond Haxhinasto**

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
June 14, 2012

The United States warmly welcomes Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Albania and newly appointed Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (CoE), Mr. Edmond Haxhinasto, to the Permanent Council.

Mr. Haxhinasto, let me begin by congratulating you and the country of Albania on assuming the Chairmanship of the Council of Europe. We fully expect this next six months to show the progress the country has made in 20 years and to demonstrate Albania's readiness to take on the challenge of chairing regional and international organizations. The United States is continually impressed by the high quality of your diplomats, particularly here in Vienna, and we thank you for your excellent cooperation in Vienna, Strasbourg, Washington, Tirana, and beyond.

We agree that the ongoing, global economic crisis creates an opportunity for extremists to spread doctrines of hatred and division. We fully support the Albanian theme of "Unity in Diversity" and look forward to the outcome of the CoE's high level conference on this issue in Tirana this November.

Additionally, we believe the Strasbourg World Forum for Democracy planned for October will provide an excellent opportunity for increasing regional cooperation and coordination in the area of regional democracy building.

The United States values the European Court of Human Rights, and we welcome Albania's goal of implementing the Council of Europe's recommendation regarding guaranteeing the long term effectiveness of the Court at the national and European level.

As you know, Secretary Clinton has championed efforts to protect the rights of women and children around the world. We appreciate Albania's commitment to focus on the protection of these rights, including through the promotion of the CoE Convention on Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. We urge all countries to ratify the Convention and to demonstrate their national commitment to protecting these human rights.

The United States agrees that true regional integration necessarily involves Kosovo's full membership and participation by Kosovo in regional and international fora. We hope that progress made toward this end will continue, and that the agreement on parameters reached in the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue for the inclusion of Kosovo in international and regional organizations will be honored by all sides. Also toward this end, we would like to see increased participation of Kosovo not only in the Council of Europe but in the OSCE as well, in a manner that is in accordance with the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

Democracy and rule of law are part and parcel of the protection of national minorities and overcoming intolerance and discrimination. The United States welcomes Albania's intention to focus on these areas as well as on combating terrorism and trafficking in human beings. We fully support the need for the CoE to work in concert with OSCE executive structures and field missions to increase efficiency and efficacy through avoiding duplication and ensuring coordinated activities.

We agree that cooperation with our partner States is critical to ensuring stability. The mandates and expertise differs between the OSCE and CoE, and coordination of activities in all areas is a must. We are happy to engage with partner States at their discretion and invitation. We concur with Secretary Jaagland's three objectives for cooperation with our partners: facilitation of democratic political transition, helping to promote good governance and combating trans-border crime and global threats, and we fully support efforts to incorporate them into activities on the ground.

We thank you, Mr. Haxhinasto, for taking the time to address the Permanent Council, and we look forward to an Albanian Chairmanship of the Council of Europe which enhances a productive relationship with the OSCE.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.