



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Report by the Head of OSCE Center in Ashgabat

As delivered by Ambassador Michael Carpenter
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 13, 2023

Ambassador MacGregor, welcome back to the Permanent Council and thank you for your report. The United States appreciates the work of the OSCE Center in Ashgabat in all three dimensions of security, especially in light of the critical budgetary constraints you and your fellow OSCE Heads of Mission are facing. You have our full support, and we urge all participating States to back the Chair's tireless work and show the necessary good will to reach consensus on the budget.

Despite these fiscal hurdles, your office continues to deliver valuable results. We commend the Center's efforts in the First Dimension, including notably the cooperative border management activities in the Center's major ExB project "Strengthening Border Service Capacities in Turkmenistan." This effort helps improve the effectiveness of efforts to secure Turkmenistan's border with Afghanistan and therefore to enhance security in the region. We also welcome the Center's engagement with Turkmenistan's Ministry of Defense as the OSCE works to help Turkmenistan meet its Vienna Document commitments through a combination of technical support and capacity-building.

In the Second Dimension, the Center has taken notable steps on anti-corruption and good governance. The Center's support to the Turkmen government in aligning its efforts against money laundering and counterterrorism financing with Financial Action Task Force standards are particularly important. The Center's support for the implementation of the National Climate Change Strategy, Strategy for Development of Renewable Energy until 2030, and creation of the first Roadmap for Green Hydrogen Energy Development all bolster the capacity of Turkmenistan to address the environmental, economic, and human security challenges posed by climate change. As we saw with the High-Level Conference on Climate Change here less than a week ago, many OSCE participating States are moving with greater urgency to address these challenges and the Center's work is yet another reflection of how the Organization can assist them in doing so.

In the Third Dimension, the Center's efforts to advance human rights, including freedom of religion or belief, and to promote rule of law, are noteworthy and critical. We encourage Turkmenistan to work with the Center to make progress in fulfilling its commitments in the human dimension, including respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. We support the Center's work to promote gender equality – especially important to highlight given today's Gender Equality Action Plan discussion – and assist victims and survivors of domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence, particularly strengthening referral mechanisms. Turkmenistan's interest in developing a National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security is of utmost importance as well, and we trust the Center will help to advance this effort.

On media legislation modernization and media freedom, we note that freedom of expression and journalistic independence have long been U.S. priorities in the OSCE region, including in Turkmenistan. The United States commends your emphasis on supporting implementation of Turkmenistan's National Human Rights Action Plan 2021-2025 and its provisions particularly related to media freedom.

Ambassador MacGregor, thank you to you and your dedicated team for your work at the OSCE Center in Ashgabat.

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