

United States Mission to the OSCE



Response to the Presentations by the Chairpersons of the Security Committee; the Economic and Environmental Committee; and the Human Dimension Committee

As delivered by Ambassador Michael Carpenter
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
February 10, 2022

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The United States welcomes the distinguished representatives of the First-, Second-, and Third-Dimension Committees to the Permanent Council. Thank you, Ambassadors Kinnear, Raunig, and Karlsen for your leadership and collaborative approach with participating States. The United States looks forward to a productive year ahead.

Ambassador Kinnear, dear Jocelyn, the United States greatly appreciates your efforts as Chair of the Security Committee in motivating participating States to focus on areas where we can together strengthen the common security of the OSCE region. The work of the Security Committee is today more important than ever. Among the many threats we face, cyber-attacks are fast becoming the most costly and debilitating. Participating States must enhance our cybersecurity cooperation and leverage the tools we have available to defend against cyber threats.

The United States also shares your concern regarding the growing threat from racially or ethnically motivated violent extremism, an issue that affects all participating States.

We also hope to make tangible progress on protecting critical infrastructure and soft targets, as well as finding ways to build on the progress of previous Chairs to strengthen our collaboration on combating transnational organized crime.

In identifying and implementing effective measures to address all of these important concerns, we need to ensure all our work in the security dimension reflects full adherence to OSCE values, principles, and commitments – including upholding, online and offline, freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, and freedom of religion or belief. OSCE's comprehensive security concept makes clear that we cannot achieve lasting security among states without respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms within states.

The United States welcomes Ambassador Raunig's continuation in his role as the Chair of the Economic and Environmental Committee. Thank you, Ambassador Raunig, dear Florian, for providing firm stewardship of the Committee, which paved the way for the significant Ministerial Council Decision on climate change last year. We will do our utmost to support your work to identify areas of possible consensus regarding the Polish CiO's priority of sustainable pandemic

recovery. We recognize the nexus of pandemic-related public expenditures and corruption warrants greater discussion in the Second Dimension.

This touches on core issues of good governance, ranging from enhancing accountability and transparency in public procurement processes, to securing supply chain integrity, and improving the administration of essential public services. Anti-corruption remains one of the United States' key national security priorities and is a priority for me. Corruption is a security threat, a drag on economic growth, and an impediment to democratic institutions. We look forward to working with your committee on how to strengthen our anti-corruption toolkit.

We also look forward to discussions on ways to operationalize the 2021 decision on climate change in meaningful ways and how we can mitigate the climate threat and strengthen climate resilience as we build back better. Our goal should be to determine collectively how the OSCE can use all tools at its disposal to best address what has rapidly become an existential threat to us and future generations.

Ambassador Karlsen, dear Anne-Kirsti, thank you for agreeing to continue chairing the Human Dimension Committee at a time when we continue to face daunting challenges to human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, which undergird the rights- and rules-based international order. Some governments are using the pandemic as a pretext for the repression of human rights defenders, civil society, and independent journalists and as a pretext for a crackdown on the exercise of fundamental freedoms, including freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, and association. Unfortunately, the number of political and religious prisoners and detainees continues to grow. Furthermore, despite our common commitment at the 2020 Tirana Ministerial, torture has yet to be eradicated in our region, and we must use the decision to put an end to this practice. The Biden-Harris administration has been clear that defending the dignity and human rights of all -- women and girls, LGBTQI+ individuals, persons with disabilities, fellow human beings of every race, ethnic background, and religion -- remains a top priority. We look forward to substantive discussions on all these issues throughout your thoughtful year-long program.

In a related vein, we are pleased that Poland has already circulated draft decisions for both the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting and the Human Dimension Seminar and urge swift consideration and adoption of those decisions to enable sufficient planning.

Chairs, the United States deeply appreciates the work and thought you and your teams have devoted to starting off the new year with robust action plans to ensure the OSCE is well-positioned to tackle the many problems and opportunities in our region.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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