



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Reports by the Three Committee Chairs

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Kate Byrnes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 24, 2016

The United States joins other delegations in expressing its appreciation to each of the distinguished Chairs for their work. We are also grateful for all those who participate constructively in the three committees, which have done so much to advance the work of this Organization and help participating States fulfill their OSCE commitments.

Regarding the First Dimension, we greatly appreciate Ambassador Istrate's continued leadership in the Security Committee. The direction and counsel that you have provided have ensured a steady stream of successes that continue to benefit this Organization. The Security Committee's efforts throughout the year to address the threat from terrorism are reflected in two potential deliverables for the Hamburg Ministerial. These draft decisions reaffirm our commitments and support the implementation of important UN resolutions and past ministerial decisions. The United States thanks you for guiding the Security Committee through the past year, building upon various discussions shaped by speakers and debate, to get us to where we are today.

Ambassador Istrate, your support of the Cyber Security Informal Working Group has been commendable as participating States continue to work towards a framework of responsible state behavior in this critical area. Just last week, the Secretariat completed the very first test of our Confidence Building Measures. This is another reminder of how the OSCE is breaking new ground on an important security issue.

Ambassador Istrate, you brought to our attention your efforts to encourage participating States to voluntarily report to the Security Committee on how they implement various OSCE commitments related to countering terrorism. These presentations give us constructive ideas and best practices for deliberation and debate. You can count on our delegation's continued support for such efforts in the Security Committee, for the First Dimension draft ministerial decisions, and for the implementation of cyber CBMs.

In the Second Dimension, the United States is very pleased that Ambassador Zugic agreed to Chair the Economic and Environmental Committee. Ambassador Zugic, we appreciate the leadership you bring to the Committee as former Chair of the Permanent Council, as well as the constructive approach that you and the Serbian delegation demonstrate. As you emphasized in your report, the Economic and Environmental Committee has brought together civil society, academic experts, government officials, and business representatives to discuss the effect of good governance on the investment climate; the fight against corruption, money-laundering, and terrorism financing; the security of supply chains; and labor migration.

The Second Dimension's work to combat corruption remains a top priority for the United States. Corruption undermines democratic progress, respect for human rights, governmental accountability, political and social inclusion, law enforcement, border security, and economic growth – all of which affect security. As discussed at last month's Economic and Environmental Dimension Meeting, implementation of OSCE commitments on whistleblowing can help participating States not only identify and prevent corruption, but also recover assets illegally gained through corruption. In the U.S. experience, over \$70 billion has been recovered and returned to the U.S. Treasury under the U.S. False Claims Act.

Ambassador Zugic, as you highlighted in your report, the Second Dimension offers opportunities to reduce tensions and improve stability by increasing economic connectivity among OSCE participating States. Thank you for your leadership in this effort. Working with the German Chairmanship, we encourage you to explore how OSCE participating States, their Partners for Cooperation, field missions, and the OSCE Border Management Staff College can work together more closely to remove barriers to cross-border cooperation, support trade facilitation and customs cooperation, and improve the regional investment climate. As we focus on Hamburg, the United States supports adoption of a ministerial decision on good governance and connectivity. We believe broad support exists for such a text, and hope we can reach consensus.

Ambassador Pehrman, the United States thanks you and Finland for the dedication, fresh ideas, and constructive approach you and your excellent team bring to the Third Dimension. Human Dimension Committee meetings in 2016 have covered an impressive range of issues, from preventing torture to freedom of expression, from child rights to free and fair elections. Your leadership has ensured the participation of high-level speakers from international organizations, including the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights and the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities. You ensured voices from civil society and the grassroots were heard, and that there was regular involvement by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and other OSCE institutions. We applaud your efforts to make the Committee's work as transparent as possible to the world outside the Hofburg, and support further advancements in this regard.

The United States sees value in voluntary reporting in the Human Dimension Committee, which is a useful, practical tool for understanding participating States' successes and challenges in implementing Human Dimension commitments. We were proud to have provided remarks in April by the U.S. Special Advisor for International Disability Rights, Ms. Judith Heumann, and a voluntary report in June by Commissioner of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, Ms. Christy McCormick.

Ambassador Pehrman, thank you for your ongoing leadership as you guide participating States through negotiations in the Human Dimension Committee on no less than seven texts. It is not a secret that the texts being negotiated – torture prevention, combating hate crimes, and bolstering freedom of expression among them – are some of the most complicated and contentious issues addressed by the OSCE today. The United States will continue to actively participate in good faith and in the spirit of moving this Organization forward.

In closing, let me again offer the thanks of the United States to Ambassadors Istrate, Zugic, and Pehrman, who, by chairing our three committees, do so much to assist all participating States to uphold and implement their OSCE commitments.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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