



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Address by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland, H.E. Elina Valtonen

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Katherine Brucker
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
September 19, 2024

Thank you Madam Chair, Minister Valtonen, for your address and clear articulation of Finland's sustained commitment to the OSCE and the principles on which it was founded. The United States shares this commitment and looks forward to working with you as Chairperson-in-Office.

It is fitting that Finland will Chair our organization as we celebrate the 50-year anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act's historic signing. The principles our countries committed to uphold are as important today as they were in 1975. Yet, now they are being challenged more than ever. At no point since World War II has the Euro-Atlantic community confronted the levels of insecurity it faces today. Russia is wreaking death and destruction on Ukraine's citizens, cities, and infrastructure with monstrous brutality. Iran's provision of ballistic missiles to Russia has only intensified the suffering and devastation.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine is Europe's greatest source of insecurity. Russia is acting in contempt of all ten Helsinki Final Act principles. We therefore welcome Finland's pledge to keep Ukraine at the center of the OSCE's work, across all dimensions. As Secretary Blinken reaffirmed on September 11 in Kyiv, the United States will continue to work with nations across the world to support Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the principles of the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act. We do this because we know that when the United States and so many other partners stand with Ukraine, we not only affirm those principles for Ukraine, we affirm them for the sake of all nations – and for all people.

Lamentably, Putin's war against Ukraine is not our region's only source of insecurity. In a number of participating States, those who work to advance and defend human rights and fundamental freedoms are repressed, and space for independent civil society and media freedom is shrinking. Many countries are being ravaged by climate change and environmental degradation. We all share concerns about terrorism and violent extremism. And Europe's protracted conflicts continue to threaten lives and impede the potential of entire regions. We take seriously Finland's commitment to use the OSCE to improve the security of our citizens, mitigate risks to security, and enhance resilience – across all dimensions. We must all do more to live up to our shared OSCE principles and implement our commitments.

We support Finland's prioritizing the approval of a Unified Budget for 2025. The OSCE's work matters to the hundreds of millions of our citizens living in our vast region. But the OSCE needs our collective financial support to achieve its mission. Without an approved Unified Budget since 2021, we have asked the OSCE – in particular the field missions – to maintain operations day-to-day and respond to urgent needs, when necessary, without predictable resources that enable effective planning.

We hope Finland's conversations about, and approaches to, an initial unified budget, and consideration of additional measures to build financial resilience for the OSCE, will be productive and allow us to focus our energies on longer-term priorities and the OSCE's strengths.

Finally, we look forward to working with you to identify new ways to support the OSCE to modernize and improve its operations. We must prepare for the future. We look forward to working closely with Finland on the full range of its 2025 Chairpersonship priorities and to secure the financial and human resources we need to advance our common goals.

Minister Valtonen, we are living in extraordinary times, and we know Finland will continue Malta's extraordinary leadership in navigating these challenges. I assure you the United States will be your unfailing partner.

Thank you Madam Chair.

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