



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Report of the Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, Ambassador Jan Braathu

As delivered by Chargé d’Affaires, a.i. Katherine Brucker
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 13, 2024

Ambassador Braathu, welcome back to the Permanent Council. The OSCE Mission to Serbia remains vital to promoting peace, democracy, and stability in the Western Balkans. Now more than ever, it is critical that the Mission and participating States reinforce OSCE principles and commitments and help Serbia achieve its European aspirations.

We greatly appreciate the Mission’s work to improve the rule of law, human rights, media freedom, good governance, and to strengthen the capacity of law enforcement.

We applaud the fact that the Mission has led coordinated diplomatic engagement to encourage the Serbian government to implement the Seven Point Plan, which the Serbian government adopted in 2013 to address the concerns of the Albanian minority. That engagement has already yielded clear results. Serbia has made financial commitments to renovate a local school serving ethnic Albanian students, formed a working group on Kosovan-issued diploma recognition, and has taken steps to increase ethnic Albanian representation in Serbian government institutions and the police force.

ODHIR’s preliminary assessment at the June 2nd local elections were well-administered, offering voters a wide range of political alternatives. Still, additional reforms to Serbian electoral processes are required, such as further updates to the universal voter registry and reforms to open the media space to greater participation by opposition candidates. Serbia must address ODIHR’s recommendations transparently, inclusively, and expeditiously in keeping with its OSCE commitments..

We applaud the Mission’s efforts to support implementation of the Media Strategy and related legislation, to improve the professionalism of and security environment for journalists, and to share expertise with legal professionals to accelerate rule of law reforms.

The United States fully supports Serbia’s integration into the EU and other European structures. Taking the steps necessary for EU accession will enable a democratic, prosperous, and secure future for Serbia and the entire region. We are committed to helping normalize relations between Serbia and Kosovo through the EU-facilitated Dialogue, which is essential for Serbia’s European integration. The United States sees eventual mutual recognition as part of building a peaceful and productive relationship with all neighbors.

Ambassador Braathu, we know how difficult it has been for you and your team not to have a Unified Budget. I am sorry we have let you down. It is imperative, as you so passionately note, that participating States support you and all of the dedicated professionals in OSCE Field Missions - and, in fact, across the OSCE all of our OSCE employees - in your important work. . I thank you and your Serbia team for your hard work and significant accomplishments over the past year. You have our full support.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

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