



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Report by the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities Igli Hasani

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Courtney Austrian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 4, 2021

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

The United States warmly welcomes Coordinator Hasani to his first appearance at the Permanent Council.

Thank you, dear Hasani, for your report on the activities of the Office of the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities. By helping participating States to prevent and resolve conflicts and build greater trust, OCEEA's work on economic and environmental issues helps to achieve the core mission of the organization, comprehensive security in the region. The United States therefore strongly supports the work of the OSCE in the Second Dimension and continues to believe it has much untapped potential.

We appreciate OCEEA's efforts to support the work of the Swedish Chairperson-in-Office to advance its priorities—including via the Economic and Environmental Forum, the Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting, and the five thematic meetings of the Economic and Environmental Committee this year. These policy discussions are essential to the work of the Chairperson and have resulted in three draft Ministerial Council decisions currently being considered by the Committee. We are pleased to have had numerous senior-level speakers for many of these events and these speakers demonstrate the importance the Biden Administration places on multilateral work and cooperation in this Dimension.

We applaud the Chairperson's focus on women's economic empowerment, as facilitating women's meaningful participation in the global economy is critical to addressing the challenges facing our time, including climate change. We also applaud the Chairperson's efforts to add value to our existing commitments by considering the security implications of climate change and environmental degradation. The United States will continue to engage constructively in the discussions regarding all three draft decisions in the weeks ahead.

Relatedly, the COP26 in Glasgow is a pivotal moment at the start of this decisive decade to tackle the climate crisis. The window for limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius is narrowing. All Parties to the Paris Agreement should collectively commit in Glasgow to continue strengthening ambition toward a 1.5 degrees Celsius limit now, and many countries, including the United States, have put forward bold, ambitious commitments in line with that goal.

Coordinator Hasani,

We note with interest your report's discussion of ongoing OSCE programs, including anti-corruption and energy security, and agree with you on their importance. As the largest contributor to OSCE voluntary extra-budgetary projects, the United States will continue to support the organization's capacity to advance these enduring priorities by assisting participating States in implementing commitments. As you define and implement your priorities as Coordinator, which aspects of the extra-budgetary projects do you find to be most valuable to your work, and how can we – as contributing States – help to ensure these projects achieve their full potential?

We believe it is essential to utilize the full range of tools at our collective disposal. On anti-corruption, for example, we refer to the work of the Chairperson's Special Representative for Combating Corruption, Professor Anita Ramasastry, who provides the OSCE with invaluable expertise and substantive knowledge on the issue. We encourage OCEEA to find new ways to coordinate closely with the Chairperson and Professor Ramasastry in carrying out her critical work.

Such coordination is also crucial to another priority you identified in your report and that we share, which is to increase the organization's visibility. Providing greater transparency to participating States—for example, through the new Confluence Platform and informative and responsive reporting on extra-budgetary projects—is one way to increase OSCE's visibility. Another way is to improve coordination with Field Operations and leverage resources such as Special Representative Ramasastry to raise public awareness of the positive impact of the OSCE's work on the daily life of millions of people throughout the OSCE area. A third way to heighten OSCE's profile is to increase engagement with civil society and the private sector through meetings and projects supported by OCEEA. All three efforts are needed to enhance this organization's reputation as a convening power and as a source of technical assistance for participating States. It is also important for the OCEEA to keep track of actions taken by participating States to fulfill Second Dimension commitments as a resource in developing best practices and lessons learned, as well as identifying challenges and gaps.

Coordinator Hasani, we would welcome proposals for focused, practical and robustly monitored extra-budgetary projects that foster implementation of our collective economic and environmental commitments. We congratulate you on your appointment and look forward to working with you and your dedicated team.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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