



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Response to the Secretary General on the 2017 Program Outline**

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
May 12, 2016

Before I begin my statement I just have to say that I will read closely the statement delivered by our distinguished Russian colleague when it is distributed, but it is deeply disappointing to hear such a destructive statement about the organization in which we have committed not only to principles, but also to work together.

The United States welcomes the release of the 2017 Program Outline and wishes to thank the Secretary General, the fund managers, and their staff for the tremendous amount of work reflected in this important document.

The Program Outline serves as the first order of business for the OSCE's 2017 planning and budget process, and must be given careful consideration. Challenges to security across the three dimensions are only growing. Despite limited resources and competing priorities, it is still critical that participating States provide the Organization with the funding required to carry out its vital mandates. To do so, we must remain focused on areas where the OSCE has the expertise to add value and make an impact.

We commend the German Chairmanship for the timely adoption of the 2016 Unified Budget. As many around this table might recall, the United States joined consensus on that budget to allow the OSCE to move forward with its vital programs and activities. However, the budget adopted on December 31 was far from ideal, as it fell short in several vital areas.

We were disappointed that the 2016 Unified Budget did not sufficiently meet the resource needs of the three independent institutions: the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), and the Representative for Freedom of the Media (RFOM). These institutions have been underfunded for many years, hampering their ability to implement their mandates. We must ensure that these institutions receive adequate funding in the future.

Russian aggression against Ukraine and the ensuing crisis continues to place tremendous pressure on the resources of the Project Coordinator in Ukraine (PCU). The PCU must be adequately resourced to support Ukraine's transition towards a more democratic, secure, and prosperous nation. We also believe the OSCE has a unique role to play in Central Asia, where security challenges are shifting and growing. We look forward to finally bringing the Border Management Staff College into the OSCE's Unified Budget to assist Central Asian and other participating and partner States to secure borders and contribute to the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, illicit drugs and weapons smuggling, and human trafficking.

Finally, the United States remains concerned about rising operational costs which, if not adequately addressed, may one day bankrupt this Organization. We offer our full support to the work of the Horizontal Issues Working Group as it continues its efforts to identify further efficiencies and management best practices and look forward to the Working Group's recommendations later this year.

Mr. Secretary General, it is our responsibility as good stewards of the resources provided by our nations' citizens, and as participating States of this important Organization, to provide the OSCE with the guidance to ensure that it can effectively address areas of greatest need and that its highest priorities are supported, while maintaining strict fiscal discipline. We are committed to working with you, the fund managers, participating States, and the incoming Austrian Chairmanship on constructive budget discussions with the aim of reaching timely consensus on the Organization's 2017 priorities and budget.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.