



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Chair of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Council of Europe, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Croatia, H.E. Marija Pejčinović Burić

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Harry Kamian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 14, 2018

Madame Minister, the United States warmly welcomes you to the Permanent Council in your capacity as Chair of the Council of Europe Committee of Foreign Ministers. The OSCE shares many of Croatia's priorities during its Chairmanship, such as combating corruption, protecting national minorities, promoting strong local democratic institutions, and protecting cultural heritage. Strong, independent institutions and the protection of human rights are essential for accountable, democratic government, justice, economic growth, and lasting security.

Good governance is essential to promoting a rules-based, democratic international order. Our two organizations set an example by continuing our close cooperation at multiple levels and on a range of issues, such as democratic elections. Our shared values and common commitments form the basis for our organizations to work together to promote a secure and prosperous world. When international obligations are violated, we must together hold the transgressor to account, uphold the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, and defend human rights and the rule of law.

As you rightly pointed out in your statement, corruption is another significant barrier to economic growth and political stability. It undermines trust in public institutions, contributes to political instability, and is a threat to security. The United States is one of 49 OSCE participating States who are also members of the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO). We encourage the OSCE to coordinate with GRECO to encourage compliance with the organization's anti-corruption standards. As all OSCE participating States are also States Parties to the UN Convention against Corruption, we encourage the OSCE to leverage commitments under the Convention to criminalize foreign bribery and strengthen anti-money laundering efforts. We also look forward to working in concert within the OSCE and CoE as we take steps to prevent and combat corruption.

There are other areas in which the efforts of the OSCE and Council of Europe complement each other, and in which we encourage further collaboration, including the protection of human rights of members of national minorities. Empowering local government institutions is essential for managing migration flows and building strong democratic institutions. And as

several delegations have already noted, the preservation of cultural heritage and the fight against the illegal trafficking of cultural objects, also are worthwhile endeavors.

We also note that the European Court of Human Rights has ruled on a number of cases raised in the OSCE Permanent Council by my country and by other participating States, and we share an abiding interest in seeing justice prevail.

In conclusion, the OSCE and the Council of Europe have important roles to play and significant scope for cooperation in defending and promoting human rights and strong democratic institutions. This close relationship has our full support.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.