



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

### **Response to the Foreign Minister of Macedonia, H.E. Nikola Poposki**

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Kate M. Byrnes  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
March 16, 2017

The United States welcomes Foreign Minister Poposki to the Permanent Council, and thanks him for his remarks. We remain concerned about the political situation in Macedonia, and continue to closely monitor developments.

Mr. Foreign Minister, your presence here at the Permanent Council demonstrates responsiveness to the concerns expressed by the United States and other OSCE participating States. Thank you for coming and for your frank assessment.

We are pleased that Macedonia's political leaders, including President Ivanov, Foreign Minister Poposki, and the leaders of all parliamentary political parties met with Secretary General Zannier during his visit to Skopje on March 9. It is important for Macedonia's political leaders to remain engaged with the international community, and for peaceful dialogue to continue within the country.

The United States remains disappointed that President Ivanov declined to offer the opportunity to form a new government to parliamentarians who have a clear majority. We continue to believe this action was inconsistent with OSCE commitments, basic democratic principles, and the rule of law. As a strategic partner and friend of Macedonia, and with full respect for its sovereignty and unity, the United States urges President Ivanov to reconsider his decision.

We also urge the government, political leaders, and political parties to refrain from attacks on civil society organizations, to help provide the conditions and support for independent voices and institutions to perform their work, and to avoid rhetoric that inflames tensions. At the same time, the need for Macedonia's neighbors to exercise restraint and be constructive remains urgent during this moment of heightened political sensitivity in the country.

We join the Secretary General's call for the Ohrid Framework Agreement to be fully implemented, and support the assistance provided to Macedonia offered by the OSCE, its independent institutions, and the OSCE Mission to Skopje.

The United States continues to call on all parties to put the interests of Macedonia and its citizens above all else, to work together constructively, and to fully implement all of their commitments under the Przino Agreement. Resolution of the current political crisis can only come through adherence to Macedonia's laws and international obligations, and respect for the will of the people freely expressed through democratic processes, including on the basis

of the results of the December 2016 elections, and in a spirit of inclusiveness and inter-ethnic cooperation.

Together with our NATO allies and EU partners, the United States continues to closely follow the political situation in Macedonia.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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