



## United States Mission to the OSCE

### **Statement in Response to German FM Frank-Walter Steinmeier**

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
January 18, 2007

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Minister, the United States wants to warmly welcome you and express its delight that you could join us here today. Your presence in Vienna early in Germany's EU Presidency reflects the high regard you have for the OSCE. The values this organization champions - human rights, democracy, and the rule of law - also form the basis of our close bilateral relationship with Germany and the 26 other members of the European Union. Chancellor Merkel's visit to Washington, and the broad range of subjects discussed, indicates the depth and breadth of the United States' relationship with Germany and the European Union.

Mr. Minister, we share your view that the OSCE remains a unique and vital forum for political dialogue across all three dimensions of security. We believe that the OSCE should recommit itself to building greater security and stability in those OSCE regions that have recently experienced conflict or where conflicts remain unresolved.

We applaud Germany's intention to focus on stabilizing the western Balkans during its EU presidency and to designate Kosovo a main priority in the region. It continues to be a priority for the OSCE as well. The people of Kosovo have a right to clarity about their future. The region can't move forward without resolving this issue.

We back fully the integration of the western Balkans into Euro-Atlantic institutions and believe it is natural and appropriate for the EU to take a leading role in this area. The United States shares your view that the OSCE should continue to play a significant role in Kosovo, regardless of the outcome of the status negotiations. The OSCE should ensure that its profile in Kosovo is carefully coordinated with the EU so that there is no duplication of effort in this strategically and politically important region.

The United States also very much welcomes your proposals to use the EU's European Neighborhood Policy to build stronger ties to Ukraine, Moldova, and the Caucasus. We believe there are unique opportunities at present for the OSCE to work with the EU to develop new confidence building measures that should enhance conflict prevention and help us resolve the protracted conflicts, which continue to challenge us all. That may require new and difficult commitments from the EU and its member states; we are confident that Europe is ready to lead in this regard, and will not shrink from such responsibilities.

In the same vein, we welcome your intention to focus greater EU attention on Central Asia and believe that it can complement efforts within the OSCE. Our engagement with Central Asia should be balanced across all three dimensions, and the EU and OSCE must continue to nurture democratic reform.

Initiating a dialogue on energy security and diversification offers an intriguing way to promote further OSCE and EU collaboration while simultaneously invigorating the second dimension. Energy security, moreover, may be a particularly relevant subject for engaging participating States from Central Asia and the Caucasus.

With Bulgaria and Romania's accession to the EU on January 1st, the European Union now accounts for just under fifty percent of all OSCE participating States. It should not be a surprise therefore that the EU relationship with the OSCE is characterized as one of increasing collaboration and partnership. Germany's simultaneous chairmanship of the EU and G8 offers a unique window of opportunity to elevate cooperation with the OSCE in all three dimensions. We have every confidence that Germany will do exactly this. We wish you every success in this regard.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.