



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

### **Response to Foreign Minister José Garcia-Margallo of Spain**

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
May 11, 2015

The United States extends a warm welcome to Foreign Minister Garcia-Margallo. We greatly appreciate your time, and we thank you for your insightful remarks to the Permanent Council.

You join us at an important time at the OSCE—as participating States face serious threats to our collective security. You also join us when this Organization finds itself at a crossroads. The very same year we are to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, meant to foster a lasting peace throughout Europe, one of its signatories is undermining Helsinki's most fundamental principles. The crisis resulting from Russia's aggression in Ukraine has been a sobering reminder to all of us around this table that security in Europe cannot be taken for granted. As you said at the end of your speech, a renewed focus on fully implementing the commitments we have made to each other and to our people must be at the core of the future of this Organization.

For over a year now, the OSCE—through its institutions, field missions, personnel, and expertise—has played a leading role in Ukraine, with the aim of supporting a stable and democratic future for the people of Ukraine. The deployment of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine also symbolizes our shared political commitment to strengthen the security of Europe and support peace initiatives forged in Minsk. We appreciate Spain's contributions of funding and personnel to the SMM.

Mr. Minister, an area of shared interest between our countries, and among all those around this table, is combatting terrorism. Both our countries have been directly affected by al-Qaeda attacks and we know firsthand the brutal consequences of the terror that Da'esh unleashes on innocent people. We welcome Spain as a partner in the Counter-ISIL Coalition and commend your efforts to implement a national strategy on countering violent extremism and to strengthen your legislation targeting foreign fighters.

The OSCE has proven itself a leader in promoting a better understanding of how to effectively counter violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism. While the Organization has conducted numerous national capacity-building seminars in this area, particularly targeting youth and women, the Organization has voiced a readiness to do more. As the OSCE seeks to build on last year's Ministerial Council declaration on countering foreign terrorist fighters, we hope to rely on your leadership to explore ways in which participating States can collectively counter this phenomenon.

Mr. Minister, we recognize that the Mediterranean region faces destabilizing transnational threats. As you said, the tragic drowning of hundreds of migrants in the Mediterranean Sea last month makes clear the danger organized crime and human trafficking networks pose to individuals who seek a better future. Recognizing the need to address the array of threats in the Mediterranean, we remain committed to advancing a dialogue on these pertinent issues here at the OSCE.

Mr. Minister, we thank you for serving as a partner, collaborator, and a friend on many fronts. We look forward to working with you here and in New York as you continue to occupy a seat on the UN Security Council through next year. And we wish you all the best.

If I may, before concluding, respond to one of the points that you made. You said that the events of the last year had shaken the very foundations of the European security system, and I would submit to you that, instead, the foundations of the European security system remain strong. For in the same year in which the very foundation of the OSCE, the Helsinki Final Act, has been so grossly violated, the truths that are in the Final Act have all been validated. We have seen that if we had been implementing, if all States had been living up to the promises that they had made, we wouldn't have the problems we have. And so, it is not the foundations of our security system that have been called into question, but rather the seriousness of one of the participating States.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.