



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

### **Response to the Head of the OSCE Mission to Skopje, Ambassador Clemens Koja**

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a.i Harry Kamian  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
November 22, 2018

We warmly welcome you, Ambassador Koja, back to the Council, this time as Head of Mission. Thank you very much for your report, its timely submission, and the really strong informal presentation you made yesterday. Welcome back, Clemens.

Mr. Chair, Macedonia has made critical progress over the past year in its transition to a functioning democracy on a secure path to Euro-Atlantic integration. The OSCE Mission to Skopje is well positioned to continue supporting this transition, in particular through its rule of law activities and balanced engagement with all the parties, and its leadership under Ambassador Koja. Notable examples of this include judicial reform and the Mission's Trial Monitoring program, especially of cases led by the Special Prosecutor's Office (SPO). As you recall, all political parties came together to form the SPO and move beyond a turbulent period, and your office's efforts strengthen that goal.

The United States also welcomes the Mission's contributions in the areas of access to justice, media freedom, democratization, professionalizing law enforcement, strengthening Parliament, improving electoral processes and human rights, including within and between communities. Many of the efforts of your office, notably the "Building Bridges" project, engage with youth to promote a multi-ethnic society. The United States is pleased to be one of the project's six co-sponsors.

The Prespa Agreement, as I noted earlier, in our view is a historic opportunity to advance stability, security, and prosperity throughout the region. In our view, it is clearly in line with the will of Macedonia's people, it empowers their Euro-Atlantic aspirations, and should be implemented in line with domestic law and without malign influence from outside actors. Ambassador Koja, your Mission's work supporting the rule of law in Macedonia helps its people reach these goals and strengthens their capacity to combat corruption and counter malign activity that seeks to undermine democratic processes. We would like to emphasize that you have been accomplishing this while remaining well within your mandate and with the host country's aspirations in mind.

Once again, Mr. Ambassador -- dear Clemens, we welcome the excellent work your office has been doing at a critical time in Macedonia. You can continue to count on our full support, and congratulations.

Thank you.