



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Head of the OSCE Program Office in Nur-Sultan, Dr. Volker Frobarth

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Courtney Austrian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 23, 2022

Dr. Frobarth, welcome back to the Permanent Council and thank you for this detailed report on the OSCE Program Office's work in Kazakhstan. It is clear your Office and the host country have collaborated effectively across all three dimensions of security, and these efforts continue to promote good governance, human rights, and rule of law. We are grateful for your work to support the implementation of OSCE principles and commitments.

The United States remains committed to supporting a sovereign, secure, and independent Kazakhstan and supports your efforts to advance that shared goal. President Tokayev's political modernization and anti-corruption agendas offer a great deal of promise, and we believe it is critical that this organization offers support for achieving these goals by building on the Office's strong relationship with the host government. We stand ready to assist Kazakhstan as it continues to modernize, build more transparent and accountable institutions, and strengthen human rights protections, in coordination with an independent civil society.

The United States remains committed to countering terrorism and appreciates the Office's efforts to combat money laundering and terrorist financing. Your multi-year initiative to train border control officers demonstrates the Office's consistent efforts to combat crime and terrorism.

We commend the Office's efforts to strengthen the rule of law through partnerships with Kazakhstan's Ministry of Justice. We value the Office's training seminars on best practices for defense lawyers and the conference on accountability and transparency in court rulings during the pandemic. We fully endorse your Office's support for local self-governance reform and enhanced civic engagement.

We support the Office's work on promoting gender equality, particularly in the areas of gender mainstreaming in the security sector and women's participation in politics. We especially appreciate the Office's role in the implementation of the National Action Plan on the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda.

We note the challenges for media freedom in Kazakhstan and request that the Government take additional steps to protect freedom of expression, including for members of the press. Dr. Frobarth, thank you for the Office's support for freedom of expression in Kazakhstan through webinars, conferences, and training events. We also welcome the Office's partnership with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

In conclusion, we greatly appreciate your consistent work to support the government of Kazakhstan in implementing its OSCE commitments, and stand ready to support you as you carry this work forward.

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