



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Riccardo Migliori, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 11, 2012

We welcome President Migliori to the Permanent Council for the first time since his election at the Monaco Annual Session.

I attended the Annual Session, and found it a dynamic and substantive meeting. The Monaco Declaration and resolutions give us important input from our parliamentarians on the OSCE and on the issues confronting us.

There are many topics raised in the Monaco Declaration which we would like to see discussed and followed up on here. We appreciate the focus on changes and challenges in the OSCE region, particularly on protecting human rights, developing the rule of law, and striving to find peaceful solutions to unresolved conflicts.

We support the OSCE's heightened attention to Central Asia and Afghanistan, particularly as the 2014 transition approaches.

We appreciate the focus on strengthening OSCE work on cyber security, and look forward to further OSCE work on this issue, as well as on countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism.

Combating racism and xenophobia remains a high priority. I would note that our work on tolerance-related issues stems originally from the PA. We were pleased to see participation by the Chairman-in-Office Personal Representatives on Combating Anti-Semitism and on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims in the Fall Session in Tirana last week. We note the Monaco resolution on Racism and Xenophobia affecting People of African Descent in the OSCE Region, and welcome the training on this issue provided by ODIHR during the HDIM last week.

The Monaco Declaration and resolutions had a focus and perspective on gender issues, which we welcome.

We also note the resolution on Protecting Vulnerable Populations from Trafficking in Persons, and believe this issue also warrants further discussion. I would note that putting the issue of combating trafficking in persons on the OSCE agenda also originated with the Parliamentary Assembly.

We agree with the point made at Monaco that the country holding the Chairmanship-in-Office must be a leader in upholding OSCE standards and commitments. We also appreciate the timely parliamentary input on Helsinki + 40 as we discuss that initiative.

The Monaco Declaration is forward looking concerning issues related to the Arab Spring and developments in the Middle East. We also took note of the resolution on Syria passed last weekend in Tirana.

The Parliamentary Assembly, because it does not work by consensus, is able to pass resolutions on issues that might be more difficult here in the Permanent Council. For Monaco, those include resolutions on Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, the situation in Georgia, and Iran's nuclear program. While these may be difficult to follow up here in Vienna, we nevertheless value the views expressed by our parliamentarians.

Mr. President,

The United States highly values OSCE's election observation work, both by the Parliamentary Assembly and by ODIHR. We welcome the continuing cooperation between the two, including most recently the joint observation mission for the Georgian elections. The PA and ODIHR complement each other in their strengths – the long-term presence and technical advice of ODIHR, and the high profile of parliamentarians as elected officials.

We also welcome the proposal of the PA to strengthen its cooperation with OSCE structures here in Vienna, including increased interaction between the respective committees in all three dimensions.

We look forward to continuing our work with you, President Migliori, and with the Parliamentary Assembly as a whole.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.