



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Secretary General on the 2016 Program Outline

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 7, 2015

The United States welcomes the release of the 2016 Program Outline and we wish to thank the Secretary General, the fund managers, and their staff for the tremendous amount of work that went into the preparation of this important document.

The Program Outline serves as the first order of business for the OSCE's 2016 planning and budget process, and must be given careful consideration and thought. With growing challenges to security across the three dimensions, and in an environment of limited resources and competing priorities, it is critical that we remain focused on areas where the Organization has the expertise to add value and make an impact. We commend the Serbian Chairmanship for getting the 2015 budget adopted on time, allowing the Organization to move ahead with important programs, as Russia continues to defy OSCE principles in its aggression against Ukraine and its repression at home, adding to the strain that is already placed on the OSCE's modest resources.

The OSCE's comprehensive approach to security, which recognizes the importance of human rights protection as well as hard security and economic factors, is unique and should be defended and expanded where appropriate. The OSCE's institutions should be sufficiently funded. Recently, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) declined several requests from participating States and canceled planned activities, including observation of some elections, due to budgetary concerns.

We believe the OSCE has a unique role to play in Central Asia, where security challenges across all three dimensions are shifting and growing. Bringing the Border Management Staff College into the OSCE's Unified Budget will be key to the organization's ability to assist Central Asian and other participating and partner States to secure borders and contribute to the fight against terrorism, illicit drugs and weapons smuggling, and human trafficking.

We welcome progress in the Balkans, and the efforts taken by those field missions to hand off successful activities to local actors, reduce overlap with other organizations, and streamline operations. Events in and around Ukraine continue to place tremendous pressure on the resources of the Project Coordinator in Ukraine, which should be adequately resourced to support the country's transition towards a more democratic, secure, and prosperous future. We encourage the OSCE to continue its efforts to strengthen accountability and transparency through more robust implementation of evaluation practices, with the goal of achieving more effective and efficient executive structures.

As the Secretary General stated, "resources have continued to diminish in real terms" and thus "prioritization of the OSCE's diverse tasks becomes ever more a necessity." It is our

responsibility as good stewards of resources provided by our nations' citizens, and as participating States of this important Organization, to provide the OSCE with the guidance to ensure that it can effectively address areas of greatest need and that its highest priorities are supported, while maintaining strict fiscal discipline. Mr. Secretary General, we are committed to working with you, the fund managers, participating States, and the incoming German Chairmanship on constructive budget discussions with the aim of reaching timely consensus on the Organization's 2016 priorities and budget.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.