



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Head of Mission in Skopje, Ambassador Herrero

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Hugh Neighbour
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 30, 2009

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

Ambassador Herrero, welcome to the Permanent Council and thank you for your report today.

The OSCE Spillover Monitoring Mission to Skopje continues to play an integral role in supporting the Government in its reform process. We applaud the OSCE's continuing contributions to coordinating the diverse efforts of the international community, while also avoiding duplication, to promote the reform agenda in Macedonia.

Macedonia deserves recognition for a number of positive developments over the period covered in the report. Municipal and Presidential elections held in March and April of this year met most OSCE standards and were a major improvement over the elections of June 2008. The recent recommendation by the European Commission for visa free travel is another tangible result of the progress Macedonia has made in related reforms.

We urge continued progress on Rule of Law issues. Implementation of commitments regarding transparency and independence of the Judiciary is crucial.

We also place great store in the mission's continued confidence-building work to deepen cooperation and mutual understanding between different political and ethnic communities in Macedonia, in the spirit of the Framework Agreement.

The mission's programs in the areas of rule of law, police reform, good governance, and confidence building are making significant contributions to stability and progress in Macedonia. We appreciate the efficiency of the mission's activities and the transparency of its decisions, and we commend the Head of Mission and his staff for their hard work.

Thank you very much for joining us today, Ambassador Herrero.

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.