



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Report by HoM Serbia

As prepared for delivery by Chargé d'Affaires Kyle Scott
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 5, 2009

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

Thank you as well, Ambassador Urstad, for your comprehensive and balanced report. We agree that Serbia continues to take positive steps along the path of democratic reform despite the political and economic challenges that 2008 presented. This has been facilitated by the collaborative relationship that your mission enjoys with the government of Serbia, and also by the hard work and dedication of you and your staff.

We value greatly the continued work of the Mission in law enforcement reform, accountability, and transparency. We are encouraged to hear that there is good cooperation with the Ministry of Interior. The positive results of the public perception survey on citizens' view of the police highlight the important work of both the Mission and Serbian Ministries in this critical area.

Serbia still faces daunting challenges with corruption and organized crime, and we view the Mission's assistance in these areas as essential. Serbia's establishment of the Anti-corruption Agency is a positive step, and we hope that the authorities will provide the necessary support.

We applaud the Mission's progress in rule of law, including support for comprehensive reform of the courts, judiciary, and prosecution. Implementation of legislative changes adopted in 2008 will consolidate this progress.

We commend the mission for the excellent work it is doing to help Serbia meet international human rights standards and to fight discrimination and intolerance. We take note of your point regarding the unresolved problem of refugees and IDPs, and call on countries in the region to live up to commitments made in the Sarajevo Declaration of 2005. We congratulate Serbia on the appointment of a National Coordinator for Combating Trafficking, and look forward to adoption of the National Action Plan in 2009.

We welcome the progress Serbia has shown in its cooperation with the ICTY over the past year. We hope that this will continue, and we congratulate the Mission for its role in facilitating this cooperation.

Ambassador Urstad, the work of your Mission is helping Serbia advance its aim of Euro-Atlantic integration. While challenges remain, such as implementing the numerous laws passed in recent months, the trend is positive. We value the contribution the Mission has made to this process. In closing, since this is your last appearance before the Permanent Council, we want to thank you for your excellent work. We are sorry to see you go, and we wish you all success in your future endeavors.

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.