



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Response to the Presentations of the Chairs of the Three Committees**

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
February 12, 2015

We thank the committee chairs for providing the Permanent Council with their plans for 2015. The United States is committed to the work ahead of us in each of these committees to advance the multi-dimensional approach that is at the heart of the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security.

One message that we delivered in January, when the Chairman-in-Office Serbian Foreign Minister Dacic discussed the Chairmanship's priorities for the year ahead, bears repeating: "Our common OSCE commitments are rock solid and represent the best formula for achieving sustainable comprehensive security in our region and in our time." The United States believes that the committees, and their leadership, are central to upholding and advancing our collective commitments in each of the OSCE's dimensions.

Let me start by welcoming Ambassador Istrate as the new Chairman of the Security Committee. Like you, we thank Ambassador Schroeder for his capable leadership, and are glad for your willingness to take the reins. Ambassador, the United States thanks you for your willingness to lead this Committee especially at this very important juncture — at a time when countering terrorism is an ever more central focus for us all. We are grateful to know that the Committee is in very capable hands, as evidenced by Romania's active participation in the First Dimension over the past several years. We look forward to working closely with you in 2015.

Ambassador, we support your plans for the Security Committee to focus on implementation of the declarations adopted in Basel on countering foreign terrorist fighters, kidnapping, and hostage-taking for ransom. Thank you for your preview of your practical approach to supporting our work in that regard. We look forward to Committee discussions on a range of issues in the counter-terrorism arena, including addressing violent extremism and radicalism that lead to terrorism, countering terrorist financing, and preventing youth radicalization. We welcome continued implementation of our first set of cyber-security confidence building measures and efforts to reach consensus on a second set of practical cooperative measures. We also support your plans for the Committee to focus on border security issues.

After Ambassador Algayerova concluded a distinguished two-year tenure as Chair of the Economic-Environmental Committee, the United States is particularly pleased that Ambassador Leko has accepted the Chairmanship's invitation to chair the Economic and

Environmental Committee. Ambassador Leko, you have outlined an excellent and ambitious schedule for the Second Dimension Committee, with important thematic topics such as anti-corruption and energy security. We appreciate, in particular, that the Committee will focus on several of the OSCE's field missions and the activities they have undertaken in the Second Dimension. These are critical elements of the OSCE's work, and we should continue to consider how we can better support them.

A major focus of the Economic and Environmental Committee will be the production of a report on strengthening the OSCE's capacity for preventing and combatting corruption. Many delegations have shown a strong interest in contributing to the success of this report. We urge all involved to continue in the collaborative and constructive spirit that has marked our discussions thus far on combatting corruption within the OSCE area.

Ambassador Kvile, the United States thanks you and Norway for the wise, principled leadership and the resources that you bring to the Human Dimension Committee. The Human Dimension Committee provides an important forum to discuss the implementation of our commitments and to hear from relevant OSCE representatives and institutions, as well as experts and civil society representatives. Where we have Human Dimension commitments, we must discuss how to improve our abilities to uphold and advance them; and where we do not have commitments, we should discuss whether to establish them. The United States also encourages, and aims to participate in, voluntary reporting—which is an exceptionally useful, practical tool for understanding States' successes and challenges in implementing their Human Dimension commitments.

We welcome your efforts to focus the standing agenda of each meeting on a particular topic and are pleased that this year's topics include the freedom of expression, freedom of religion or belief, and freedom of peaceful assembly and association, as well as the promotion and protection of human rights while combatting terrorism.

In closing, the United States appreciates the leadership of the three chairs and looks forward to their efforts to enhance coordination and cooperation among the committees. We extend our sincere thanks and our best wishes to Ambassadors Istrate, Leko, and Kvile.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.