



**United States Mission to the OSCE**  
**Response to Report by**  
**Head of the OSCE Mission in Montenegro,**  
**Ambassador Janina Hrebičkova**

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
March 19, 2015

The United States welcomes Ambassador Janina Hrebičkova back to the Permanent Council in her role as Head of the OSCE Mission in Montenegro. Ambassador, we appreciate all the hard work that you and your staff have dedicated to the Mission and to the people of Montenegro.

We agree with your assessment of positive developments related to Montenegro's political and social stability. We have seen the passage of important legislation over the past year, including amendments to the Electoral Code in response to recommendations from ODIHR, the establishment of an independent anti-corruption agency, and improvements to Montenegro's Law on Protection from Discrimination. We note positive developments in investigating past attacks on journalists and other members of the media, but additional progress needs to be made to strengthen the rule of law and ensure a safe and welcoming environment for independent media.

Ambassador, your report outlines a wide array of activities undertaken by the OSCE Mission this past year in support of Montenegro's reform efforts. We welcome the support for progress on rule of law and human rights issues, including training and workshops for judges, prosecutors, and police. We also welcome the Mission's efforts to support the integration and inclusion of Montenegro's minority communities, especially Roma, Ashkali, and Balkan Egyptians. There is still work to be done to ensure that individuals from these communities obtain the proper residence documentation and are able to access public services. The Mission's work to increase civil servants' capacity to respond to requests from the public for access to government documents is an excellent example of a field mission working to help the host country meet the high standards of OSCE commitments to good governance and transparency. We value the Mission's assistance in anti-corruption prosecutions and its role in helping to organize a regional meeting of Financial Intelligence Unit heads. This is just the sort of regional approach the United States has been advocating as a means for the OSCE to address a range of issues faced by countries in the Western Balkans.

Ambassador, we thank you again for your efforts, and for the hard work of your staff in Podgorica. We look forward to maintaining a strong and collaborative relationship between the OSCE and Montenegro that supports Montenegro in its pursuit of greater European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.