



## United States Mission to the OSCE

# **Response to Report by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Rolf Ekeus**

As prepared for delivery by Chargé d' Affaires Kyle Scott  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
June 28, 2007

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

High Commissioner Ekeus, it is a great pleasure to welcome you back to the Permanent Council. For the last six years you have done a superb job as the OSCE's High Commissioner on National Minorities. We have all benefited enormously from your efforts on behalf of national minorities. Thank you.

Thank you also for providing us with your reflections on the successes and challenges you have faced since 2001, as well as your insights on the strengths and constraints of your mandate. These will be valuable to the Participating States as well as to your successor.

The United States believes that the OSCE plays an important role in addressing national-minority related issues in participating States. The office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities is a unique feature of the international security architecture. Your focus on conflict prevention—which is much less costly than crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation—is always very welcome. I would also like to reiterate the United States' strong support for the continued autonomy of all the OSCE Institutions, including the High Commissioner on National Minorities.

Mr. High Commissioner, your regional engagement efforts have been especially welcome, and the United States has especially supported your engagement in Central Asia. Your initiatives to promote respect of minorities' linguistic and educational rights in Kazakhstan and to enhance cooperation between the police and minorities in Kyrgyzstan were excellent. The agreement last November between all five Central Asian states to establish four technical working groups to move the cooperation process forward in concrete terms was an important initiative. We encourage all the Central Asian states to continue to engage in this process of cooperation.

The United States agrees wholeheartedly with you that important work lies ahead in the area of reconciliation, especially in the Balkans. The international community must support reconciliation efforts to secure a long-term peace and to prevent the reemergence of violence. Your unique efforts with the Kosovo Albanian and Serb communities in this regard have been vital and should continue. A strong basis to continue this work has been outlined by the UN Special Envoy for Kosovo in his proposed settlement plan. President Ahtisaari's proposal offers broad protections for all communities in Kosovo, and we encourage both parties to come together on the basis of the Ahtisaari recommendations.

We would like to thank you and your staff for effectively carrying out your mandate to provide early warning and early action on tensions involving minority issues.

Thank you again, High Commissioner Ekeus. We wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.