



United States Mission to the OSCE

Reply to Russia

As delivered by Chargé d' Affaires Kyle Scott
at the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 22, 2007

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In this debate there were some rather unprecedented claims and arguments being made against an executive institution of our OSCE. I was waiting, hoping that from the podium we would in fact hear a defense. Since the institution in question is in fact not present and able to explain or reply to some of the claims, I think it would be prudent that some of the statements which were made earlier be transmitted to ODIHR and that they would be given an opportunity to reply before this Permanent Council at some time in the future.

If I can, however, respond to one statement which was a reference to my own country and an implication that somehow during the visit of ODIHR Director Strohal to the United States, the United States in some way applied or tried to influence his decision in this regard. I can first state that to the best of my knowledge Mr. Strohal traveled to Washington to participate in an OAS meeting on electoral observation. I have no doubt whatsoever that the OAS did not try to influence or instruct Mr. Strohal on how to decide on this.

On the margins of that meeting he did have bilateral meetings with the State Department to consult on a range of issues covered by his office. I can say that there was no attempt whatsoever to influence in any way the decision which ODIHR eventually took.

With regard to these elections I am sure that my Russian colleague, who seemed so concerned about this and has already drawn some conclusions, may not believe my assurances in this regard. All I can say is that for the lion's share of the various different meetings which Mr. Strohal held with State Department officials while he was in Washington, he was also accompanied by our Secretary General of the Organization who I am sure can attest as well to what took place in those meetings and how those discussions proceeded.

Thank you.