



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Report by the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on Combating Corruption

As delivered by Political Officer Kent Mullen
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
December 7, 2023

Special Representative Ramasastry, dear Anita, welcome back to the Permanent Council, and thank you for your detailed report. Your critical work is helping participating States address corruption as a threat to the comprehensive security of the OSCE region.

As your report illustrates, the corrosive effects of corruption damage nearly all aspects of societies. Corruption exacerbates social, economic, and political inequality, and obstructs state responses to urgent crises. Corruption erodes public trust in state institutions, steadily steering the state towards a collapse into kleptocracy, where autocrats sacrifice the common good of the many for the personal gain of the few. This is most apparent in countries like Russia, which ranks 137 out of 180 states – in the bottom quarter of Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index. Kleptocracies inflict damage not only on their own people but also beyond their borders, as their internal repression is often coupled with external aggression towards their neighbors.

Corruption also fuels conflicts and crises from wars to climate change. In a globally connected system, the fight against corruption requires the collective effort of all democratic states along with their businesses, and societal actors such as civil society organizations and media workers. This is why we value your commitment and leadership, Special Representative, in providing and coordinating support for OSCE participating States through your specialized programs and initiatives.

We applaud your efforts to work across the three dimensions, as outlined in your report. This includes notable coordination with the Transnational Threats Department and the Office of the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, or OCEEA, along with engagement with different OSCE bodies like the Parliamentary Assembly, field operations, and other Special Representatives. Your collaboration with OCEEA and across the three dimensions to prevent corruption and improve good governance has benefited numerous participating States. The United States is proud to have supported this vital work with more than \$2 million dollars of extrabudgetary contributions to programs aimed at mitigating money laundering risks and improving regional cooperation on asset recovery.

Your strategy for tackling corruption is effective, concentrating on states particularly dedicated to eradicating corrupt practices and bolstering their resilience. We especially applaud your initiatives in South Eastern Europe related to asset recovery, open data, and virtual currency. The joint statement signed by South Eastern Foreign Ministers in Skopje is a notable stride forward in our consolidated efforts against corruption. This agreement

pledges to tackle corruption, money laundering, and asset recovery by improving and employing digital technologies, while also strengthening regional collaboration among various institutions and organizations.

Madam Special Representative, you have raised the OSCE's profile in the fight against corruption by representing the OSCE at various forums, especially at the United Nations, and through collaboration with other OSCE institutions.

The United States remains firmly committed to a multifaceted approach to tackling corruption. This is evident both domestically, with our National Strategy on Countering Corruption, and on the global stage, through our active participation in multilateral organizations like the OSCE and the United Nations. The United States is proud to host the upcoming 10th session of the Conference of the States Parties to the UN Convention against Corruption in Atlanta next week and we are thrilled you are taking the opportunity to host an OSCE event there that will explore innovative strategies and best practices for enhancing political commitment in the battle against corruption.

Madam Special Representative, Professor Ramasastry, your work is vital to our collective fight against corruption, and we highly value your unwavering commitment to the cause. You and your team have our full and enduring support.

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