



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Representative of the OSCE Joint Latvian-Russian Commission on Military Pensioners

As delivered by Ambassador James S. Gilmore III
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 19, 2020

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, and thanks to Dr. Frohbart also very much for his report. Thank you, sir, for being here and giving your report.

The United States welcomes you to the Permanent Council for your annual address. We thank you for your frank assessment that your work has been largely complete.

We are pleased that no coronavirus cases have been reported among military pensioners. We note the impact of the pandemic on travel and, as a result, on your ability to convene a meeting of the Commission or meet with individual petitioners this year. At the same time, we note that the Commission has not convened since 2013, and that there have been no requests or appeals from military pensioners since 2008.

Nevertheless, the United States recognizes the success of this joint commission and that it demonstrates the ability of Latvia and Russia to deal with a serious dispute between these two sovereign nations. This commission shows a better path for Russia to deal with issues such as those in Ukraine and Georgia. Russian troops were withdrawn from Latvia, but veterans were treated fairly, and systems were set up to address this issue peacefully without continuing Russian occupation. Now Russia should withdraw its troops from Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine and follow the example of this successful initiative.

Latvian institutions have successfully resolved all issues of concern related to Russian military pensioners for many years. We support your proposal, therefore, for the Representative to the *Latvian-Russian Joint Commission on Military Pensioners* to continue to serve on a stand-by basis in the event of a request by one of the parties or an individual military pensioner. It's a good and successful structure and should now be followed in other forms and in other countries.

Thank you, Dr. Frohbart, for your service.

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