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United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Andorra, Gilbert Saboya Sunyé, in his Capacity as Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Gary Robbins
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 22, 2012

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We are pleased to welcome to the Permanent Council Andorra's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Gilbert Saboya Sunyé, in his capacity as chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, and thank him for his presentation.

The OSCE and the Council of Europe have significant, complementary roles to play in strengthening respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, and democracy. We welcome the existing collaboration between the two organizations as well as measures that may further enhance the coordination in the future. We see enhanced cooperation as a force multiplier in achieving our joint aims.

We value the long-standing cooperation by the organizations on topics such as tolerance and non-discrimination, counterterrorism, protection of national and ethnic minorities, and efforts to counter trafficking in persons. We also commend the excellent coordination between the two organizations on freedom of expression, including as exercised by members of the media and election observation.

We want to congratulate the Council of Europe on the award it recently received from the Spanish government for your work toward the eradication of domestic and gender-based violence. We welcome further formal coordination on gender equality issues and other human rights areas between the Council of Europe and the OSCE, seeing it as in the best interests of both organizations.

Minister Saboya, we also commend the Council of Europe's recent messages urging better protection of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons in Europe. In particular, we welcome the Council of Europe's expression of concern over the recent restriction of LGBT Pride Parades and its focus on proposed legislation that may inhibit fundamental freedoms of LGBT persons.

Minister Saboya, we thank you again for your appearance here today. We wish you every success in your work and look forward to continued discussion of ways to work together to advance shared priorities in the promotion of democracy, the rule of law, and human rights.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.