



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Report by the High Commissioner on National Minorities, Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Katherine Brucker
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 11, 2024

Ambassador Abdrakhmanov, welcome back to the Permanent Council. As this is your last appearance here as High Commissioner, let me take this opportunity to thank you for your years of dedicated service, not only in your current capacity, but also as Permanent Representative and Chair of the Permanent Council.

In his final address to the Permanent Council, Max van der Stoel, the first High Commissioner, warned us to remain vigilant against the threat ethno-nationalist entrepreneurs and extreme nationalism pose to human rights and security. That warning rings true today.

Russia persists with its attempt to deny and suppress the culture and identity of democratic and ethnically diverse Ukraine, including by targeting Crimean Tatars and members of other ethnic and religious minorities. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska President Dodik's anti-Dayton, anti-Muslim, and secessionist rhetoric and actions threaten to undermine a peaceful, cohesive, and multi-ethnic society. In Kosovo and Serbia, amid ongoing tensions, my government continues to urge both countries to work toward normalizing relations. Our goal is a stable future across the Western Balkans where members of ethnic minority groups benefit from state-level integration and political participation and contribute to regional growth and regional cooperation. Across the OSCE, we all must continue to work to improve the socioeconomic inclusion of Roma and Sinti communities.

The refusal by some participating States to agree to a budget complicates carrying out your mandate. The face-to-face relationship-building central to your work requires resources, as do the demand-driven technical assistance, multilingual education, and integration policy advice participating States seek as they enact reforms.

Ambassador Abdrakhmanov, thank you for your service to advancing this organization's goals. As you so poignantly note in your report, "as long as we maintain our commitments enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris, a peaceful future remains within our grasp." The United States strongly supports your office's work on contested history, gender mainstreaming, and the impact of climate change on minorities – all timely topics underscoring your mandate's relevance. I hope your successor will build on your substantial contributions to this organization.

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