



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement in Response to Stability Pact Special Coordinator Erhard Busek

As delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 16, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It's a pleasure for the United States to welcome back to the Permanent Council the Coordinator for the Stability Pact, Erhard Busek. We want to thank you, Dr. Busek, for your presentation today on the work that you have accomplished and the goals the Stability Pact continues to set and achieve.

The United States has been a strong supporter of the idea that the countries of Southeastern Europe must have a sense of ownership in the initiatives and programs that are being conducted in that region. Towards that end, we have strongly endorsed steps taken by those countries to develop closer regional cooperation, including in the area of border management and security.

We therefore welcome the ongoing efforts of the Stability Pact, and especially also of the OSCE, in continuing the significant follow-up to the Ohrid Balkan Border Conference. OSCE has been extremely successful in serving as the catalyst for closer regional cooperation on border issues. We encourage Stability Pact officials to continue to work hand-in-hand with the OSCE and other sponsors of the 2003 conference – and most importantly with the countries of the region – to help meet the needs of all of the countries in the region.

Regional economic cooperation is also the key to improving the living standards of persons in Southeastern Europe. The United States very much welcomes the June 10th commitment by all Southeastern European countries to upgrade the existing network of bilateral trade agreements into one regional agreement. We look forward to close cooperation with relevant authorities throughout this process.

We are pleased that a valued Stability Pact official, Mr. Bernard Snoy, will soon be taking charge as the OSCE Economic Coordinator. We look forward to close cooperation with him also, and to his putting to good use for all OSCE countries the invaluable experience that he has obtained working with you.

In all of the work that the Stability Pact is doing in Southeastern Europe, we would strongly encourage close cooperation with the OSCE presences in the region. We feel that the OSCE's cross-dimensional approaches to security, its considerable national and regional experience in Southeastern Europe, and its constructive work in such areas as good governance, combine to make available a valuable resource and we would urge you very much to avail yourself of that.

In closing Mr. Chairman, we wish Dr. Busek all the best – both in his capacity as the Special Coordinator for the Stability Pact, and in his role as the Chairman of the 2005 Alpbach Forum.

Thank you.