



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Response to Address by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, H.E. Frank-Walter Steinmeier**

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
July 2, 2015

We warmly welcome Minister Steinmeier to the Permanent Council, and thank him for outlining Germany's priorities for its upcoming OSCE Chairmanship. We also thank him and our German friends for taking on the responsibility of the 2016 Chairmanship at this critical period for the OSCE and for Europe.

Minister Steinmeier, as you observed, Germany will assume the Chairmanship at a time when Europe faces its greatest security crisis since the end of the Cold War. This crisis is the result of one OSCE participating State's aggression against its neighbor and violation of that neighbor's sovereignty and territorial integrity. While every Chairmanship should be concerned with upholding OSCE principles and commitments, the current situation will require the German Chairmanship to devote considerable effort to keeping the Organization and participating States focused on defending and advancing the OSCE's core principles and implementation of our shared commitments.

In the current environment of decreased trust and confidence, full implementation of all OSCE commitments, including the commitment to the confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) of the Vienna Document, is more important than ever. Events in Ukraine and elsewhere have demonstrated the utility of, and limitations in, the use of the Vienna Document. It is clear that the underlying purpose of the Vienna Document as a tool of confidence and security building remains valid. And it is equally clear that the Vienna Document needs to be updated in light of current security concerns to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness. Several of the existing provisions of the document do not provide enough transparency or predictability in the current environment. The United States looks forward to working with Germany and other participating States in this effort. Conventional arms control agreements and CSBMs are effective tools that can be used to reduce the risk of military escalation, maintain communication, and avoid dangerous misunderstandings. They cannot, however, be substitutes for responsible international behavior and respect for international law and the rules-based order it provides.

Countering transnational threats, particularly the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon and violent extremism, continues to remain high on the OSCE agenda. This week's counterterrorism conference demonstrates that this Organization is well suited to address these destabilizing threats. We welcome Germany's call for strengthened dialogue and cooperation to advance a common response to these and other threats while respecting human rights. On cyber security, we continue to advocate for the full implementation of the OSCE's

first set of cyber confidence-building measures and expanding efforts to address shared security challenges in the area of information and communication technologies. We look forward to working with the German Chairmanship on cyber issues.

The existing protracted conflicts in the OSCE area must be resolved. The status quo is not acceptable. We will continue to support efforts to move forward to a resolution of these conflicts.

We are pleased that the German Chairmanship will look closely at the link between good governance and favorable investment climates. Corruption and a lack of transparency in business and government often go hand-in-hand with the deterioration of human rights and democracy. In contrast, better governance attracts more investment and assists job growth, which is key to providing economic prosperity and security. A transparent and predictable regulatory framework gives businesses and employees alike the confidence they need to invest in long-term growth. The OSCE can do much to help participating States create this sort of fertile economic environment.

The United States supports Germany's priorities in the Third Dimension. As we all agreed in Astana, "the inherent dignity of the individual is at the core of comprehensive security, that human rights and fundamental freedoms are inalienable, and that their promotion and protection is our first responsibility." We also decided that "the commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned." We welcome Germany's emphasis on the implementation of our human rights commitments, its recognition of the pivotal role of civil society, and its intention to strengthen ODIHR, the High Commissioner for National Minorities, and the Representative for Freedom of the Media.

One way for us to strengthen OSCE institutions is to ensure that they have the right level of resources to support strong operational capabilities in all three dimensions. To this end, we pledge our full cooperation for the Chairmanship's 2016 Unified Budget negotiations.

Minister Steinmeier, we look forward to working closely with you, your OSCE team in Berlin, and our German colleagues here in Vienna to ensure a successful Chairmanship that advances implementation of all OSCE principles and commitments while bolstering the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.