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United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Report by Head of the OSCE Office in Zagreb, Ambassador Fuentes

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 6, 2008

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We would like to welcome Ambassador Fuentes to the Permanent Council for the first time in his new capacity as Head of the OSCE Office in Zagreb.

We thank Ambassador Fuentes for his detailed report. As the report points out, Croatia's progress in implementing several areas of the previous mandate allowed us to close the Mission and open the Office with a very limited new mandate.

The United States hopes that the tasks of this new mandate will be completed by the end of this year and that the Office will therefore be able to close.

For that to happen, the Office must focus its activities clearly on the two points in its mandate: monitoring war crimes cases and reporting on residual aspects of the implementation of the housing care program.

We note in this respect that the last two fortnightly reports contain items not related to the mandate: the gender equality law and the election process. While we do understand the desire to track outcomes from previous work, we would like to see reporting focused on specific items in the Office's mandate.

We commend the Office for the fine work it is doing on monitoring war crimes cases. We would also encourage the Office to focus on providing more training for civil society in Croatia, in order to build capacity for domestic monitoring after the Office closes.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.