



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Ambassador Kopaj, OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Kyle Scott
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 11, 2009

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

The United States warmly welcomes to the Permanent Council the Project Coordinator in Ukraine, Ambassador Lubomir Kopaj. We thank you for your comprehensive report. We appreciate your dedication and strong leadership.

The United States supports the excellent work being conducted by the OSCE's Project Coordinator in Ukraine in all three dimensions. The PCU operates in a challenging environment to advance OSCE commitments, and we commend your efforts to strengthen your partnership with the Ukrainian Government and other partners. We also appreciate your efforts to improve the fiscal and administrative management of OSCE projects in Ukraine.

We also commend the PCU's strategic approach to addressing democracy development, good governance, and the rule of law concerns. The anti-corruption, human rights, and institutional capacity building activities carried out by the Office will further progress in overall governance in Ukraine.

The Office's collaboration with government officials, stakeholders in the Ukrainian Parliament, academics, and others on developing a new electoral code and strengthening the capacity of the electoral commission demonstrate a keen understanding of the host country's needs. In light of the upcoming election, we were pleased to see the Office's recent donation of computers and other equipment to improve the voter registration process.

The United States urges increased focus on promoting tolerance among Ukraine's ethnic populations to further social cohesiveness and stability. The PCU can and should reinforce the work of the High Commissioner on National Minorities in reducing inter-ethnic tensions and mitigating conflict.

We also support the Office's continued efforts in the military and environmental areas. In this regard, we strongly support the initiative to aid Ukrainian authorities in eliminating excess stockpiles of conventional ammunition and rid the environment of thousands of old munitions, including melange rocket fuel, that pose both safety and security risks in various regions. Continued efforts in removing and destroying decades-old munitions require increased technical and financial resources, and we urge efforts to leverage the necessary assistance from a range of sources, including bilaterally, to supplement OSCE assistance.

While the OSCE's work in Ukraine has been exemplary in so many ways, we do remain concerned by the rather limited nature of the Memorandum of Understanding especially in

terms of the tight constraints it places on the number of international staff and also the mandate of the mission which, among other things, must be renewed every six months, rather than once a year like most others.

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.