



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Report of the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires a.i. Kate Byrnes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 26, 2015

We also take this opportunity to extend our deepest condolences to all of the families and loved ones of those who were on board Germanwings 9525. We share your deep sadness and grief at this time.

The United States welcomes Dr. Yigitgüden to the Permanent Council as he presents his latest report as OSCE Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA).

Dr. Yigitgüden, we appreciate the efforts of you and your staff since your last report. Your office has undertaken a wide range of activities in support of key decisions and declarations of recent Ministerial Councils. We welcome your work on good governance issues, including anti-corruption, anti-money laundering, and asset recovery, and your activities involving improving transport networks, examining trends and impacts of labor migration, and this year's theme of water governance. We are pleased to see continued work on the protection of critical energy networks and encourage delegations to examine ways they can contribute to that effort, including support for the "Handbook of Best Practices to Protect Electricity Networks from Natural Disasters" currently in development.

Good governance is not just an economic issue. It is essential to democratization and environmental protection. We applaud the work done by your office to support the good governance activities of the Aarhus Centers in conjunction with OSCE field missions. Such efforts, along with projects like the CASE Small Grants Program in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Tajikistan, demonstrate what the OSCE can accomplish when it works to connect ordinary citizens and civil society groups with government officials, thereby facilitating more effective and transparent environmental policies. More should be done to explore how the OSCE can support environmental good governance.

We again encourage you to review the methods your office uses to publicize its work among participating States. In the competitive market that is the Unified Budget negotiation process, results matter greatly. You are achieving good results for your efforts, but we need reporting that clearly shows the impact of those efforts, in a way that helps us demonstrate the impact of your work to our colleagues in our capitals.

The United States is pleased that this year's Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting (EEDIM) in October will focus on anti-corruption. We applaud this

choice by the Serbian Chairmanship and anticipate that the Coordinator's office will contribute a great deal to the success of this event. October seems a long way off, but we encourage our colleagues around the table to start thinking now about the ideas and lessons-learned they can bring to the conversation at EEDIM. We should all work to make the event an honest evaluation of how well we are meeting our anti-corruption commitments and a dynamic discussion of what more could be done.

An integral part of the OSCE's anti-corruption discussions this year is the preparation of the Economic and Environmental Committee's report on strengthening the OSCE's capacity to prevent and combat corruption. We wish to thank you, Dr. Yigitgüden, for your thoughtful contributions to the Group of Friends currently drafting recommendations for this report, and we encourage you to make additional recommendations as appropriate. The outcomes of this report are an opportunity for us to establish the OSCE as a key actor on fighting corruption across the OSCE area.

Dr. Yigitgüden, the United States continues to believe there is untapped potential in the Second Dimension. You have our support for your work, and we thank you for today's report.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.