



## United States Mission to the OSCE

### **Response to the Head of the OSCE Center in Ashgabat, Ambassador John MacGregor**

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Katherine Brucker  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
July 11, 2024

Ambassador MacGregor, dear John, welcome back to the Permanent Council. It's always a pleasure to see you here. The United States recognizes the important work of the OSCE Center in Ashgabat to assist Turkmenistan in implementing its OSCE commitments. Your inspired leadership over the past three years has made the Center a well-regarded partner for the people and government of Turkmenistan.

The Center's programs and activities are critical to achieving sustainable economic development, which we know Turkmenistan prioritizes. The country is taking positive steps to address its methane emissions problems, including through the President's endorsement of the Global Methane Pledge at COP 28. The Center's work, including its April seminar on methane emission management, will help Turkmenistan further address this important issue.

The Center's efforts to assist Turkmenistan in strengthening border management and security are critical in light of ongoing threats originating from Afghanistan. A strong and secure border will benefit the entire region by hindering terrorism, drug trafficking, and arms smuggling.

Advancing human rights, including freedom of expression and of religion or belief, as well as promoting the rule of law in Turkmenistan are key priorities. We encourage Turkmenistan to utilize the Center's expertise to meet its human dimension commitments. Here we note favorably that Turkmenistan amended its law in 2022 to strengthen the prohibition on torture and we strongly encourage Turkmenistan authorities to ensure the amendments are implemented. The Center should continue developing programming that assists in implementing Turkmenistan's 2021-2025 National Human Rights Action Plan, including a particular emphasis on media freedom, development of independent civil society, and respect for human rights in places of detention.

We applaud the Center's focus on gender equity and equality, and its work to improve gender balance in all its activities. The fact that the number of female participants in the Center's activities has increased from 22 percent in 2020 to 46 percent this year is truly impressive. We also support the Center's work with the government to prevent and combat human trafficking and to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

Ambassador MacGregor, the United States appreciates your commitment to the values of our organization. We also recognize the challenges you and your team face due to severe

budgetary constraints. We once again call on all participating States to approve the Unified Budget so we can give you the financial resources you so desperately need. Your work across all three dimensions of security helps ensure a secure Turkmenistan that respects the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all its people.

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