



## United States Mission to the OSCE

### **Response to the Reports by the Head of the OSCE Programme Office and the Director of the OSCE Academy in Bishkek**

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Courtney Austrian  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
June 10, 2021

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Head of Mission Rogov, welcome to the Permanent Council and thank you for your informative report. The United States values and supports the OSCE Program Office in Bishkek's work in all three dimensions throughout the Kyrgyz Republic. Your efforts will be especially important in this pivotal time for the Kyrgyz Republic to ensure that legislative reforms related to the new constitution protect democratic institutions, install proper checks and balances, and ensure that protections for human rights are in line with international obligations.

With respect to the security dimension, Ambassador Rogov, we fully support your Office's commitment to combatting terrorism and countering the violent extremism and radicalization that leads to terrorism. Your Office's sustained assistance to the Kyrgyz Republic in implementing Advanced Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) data systems prevents the movement of foreign terrorist fighters.

Such systems are crucial for participating States in fulfilling their obligations and commitments under UN Security Council Resolution 2396 and strengthening the global fight against terror. We also welcome efforts towards strengthening cybersecurity and the *Cyber Incident Response Plan* development. This plan will help the Kyrgyz Republic prepare for, respond to, and recover from network security incidents. We are pleased to note your inclusion, here and throughout the report, of the role of women in these achievements.

We are pleased with the plans for expanding research and doctoral training opportunities at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek. The Academy's unique capacity as a regional center for dialogue and development has earned its reputation as one of the OSCE's "crown jewels." As a major donor, the United States urges other participating States to support this important educational institution with extra budgetary contributions.

The United States recognizes and supports, through extra budgetary funding, the Office's sustained contributions to the removal and disposal of stockpiles of rocket fuel components in the Kyrgyz Republic. We welcome the Office's assistance in providing technical equipment and expertise to address chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threats, which has enabled the Kyrgyz Republic to successfully implement UN Security Council Resolution 1540.

We appreciate the Office's campaign to raise awareness, and its efforts to strengthen border security and address transnational threats by working with the State Border Service. Might you elaborate on

the role your Office will play in reducing regional tensions to prevent further border hostilities as seen recently between the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan?

Regarding economic and environmental activities, your Office has facilitated Kyrgyzstan's collaboration with the *Open Government Partnership*. We greatly value the Kyrgyz Republic's commitment to the tenets of the *Open Government Partnership*. The United States also appreciates your assistance to the Kyrgyz government in the fight against corruption and financial crimes, as well the extensive work being done to address the threats and challenges posed by trafficking in illicit drugs. Furthermore, we applaud the Program Office's work to enhance citizens and civil society's participation in environmental conservation.

The United States strongly supports the Program Office's activities regarding human rights and media freedom, prison conditions and ending torture, democratic development, rule of law, and gender equality. In these efforts, we appreciate your reaching out to civil society in addition to your cooperation with Kyrgyz authorities. I wonder however, Ambassador, if there is anything else the OSCE can be doing to help support Kyrgyzstan in its efforts, and I would welcome your thoughts on this issue.

We applaud your activities in support of penitentiary system reform and civil society's involvement in this effort. This work is especially timely in light of the December OSCE Ministerial Decision on eradication of torture, which remains a problem in the Kyrgyz Republic. We welcome continuing focus on the harsh and life-threatening conditions endured by many prisoners.

We celebrate the online mini-MBA course launch that will be integral to the economic empowerment of rural women. We urge the Program Office to continue to promote women's political participation. However, we are concerned by the exacerbation of domestic violence during the pandemic, as well as the continuation of "bride kidnapping", and look forward to hearing how the Office is addressing these challenges in protecting women and girls across the Kyrgyz Republic and the region at large.

We value the Office's initiatives to support freedom of expression and media freedom, particularly your support of the *Annual Media Partnership* conference. We believe that now, more than ever, it is crucial to have discussions on the safety of journalists.

Ambassador Rogov, the United States thanks you and your team for your efforts. Your team produced clear results and we trust you will build upon its record of success.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

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