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**United States Mission to the OSCE**



**Response to Luxembourg Foreign  
Minister Jean Asselborn**

As delivered by Charge d'Affaires Paul W. Jones  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
January 27, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States delegation joins with others in warmly welcoming the Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg, Mr. Jean Asselborn, to the Permanent Council today. Mr. Minister, the United States has an excellent working relationship here at OSCE with the European Union, with your ambassador to the OSCE, Jacques Reuter, and with the European Commission. We look forward to continuing to work closely with all of them throughout 2005. To that end, we extend a special warm welcome to Vienna to Ambassador Christian Falkowski, the new representative of the European Commission to the OSCE.

We are very pleased to note the similarities in your message to us today, Mr. Minister, to that set forth by our Chairman-in-Office, Minister Dmitrij Rupel, just two weeks ago. We reaffirm the key points made in our response to Minister Rupel's statement. The OSCE is not a least common denominator organization – it is a community of nations built on an aquis of common values. Those values – of freedom, human rights and free markets have stood the test of time. Making them the basis for action within and among participating States has been and remains what the OSCE is all about. Now is the time to further strengthen them, not the time to abandon them.

Of the many items you listed, let me just say a few words regarding what we consider to be OSCE's priorities for 2005.

In recent years the OSCE has adapted and expanded its activities to help states address emerging security, economic and political-military issues. Among those issues are the fight against terrorism, anti-Semitism, racism, discrimination and xenophobia, the need for good governance, combating trafficking in persons, controlling availability of small arms and light weapons, securing and destroying excess stockpiles of weapons and ammunition, and developing and consolidating democratic transformation in a number of participating states.

During 2004, the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) supported, or was involved in, fifteen elections in Europe, North America, and Central Asia. In each case it employed standards developed over the years which have been reviewed and honed in light of extensive practical experience, and which capture the essence of free elections. Those objective standards are constantly being reviewed. Indeed, at a meeting in Vienna this past July, elections officials from all 55 OSCE member states considered refinements to those standards, but did see any need for a radical overhaul.

Whether we are talking about commitments concerning elections, promoting tolerance and respect for human rights, or the withdrawal of equipment, ammunition or forces from the territory of another country, states' records of implementation demonstrate whether or not their word can be taken seriously, thereby indicating the potential for trust not just in multilateral but in bilateral affairs as well. As we have repeatedly stated, countries doing what their leaders said they would do is the essential glue that holds the OSCE together.

Despite some assertions to the contrary, there are no new fundamental dividing lines in Europe. Integration and dialogue among OSCE participating States continue to expand, breaking down the remnants of the old barriers and dividing lines. OSCE, founded on shared values and shared principles, continues to be a key facilitator of this ongoing process. As long as we retain the values of democracy and the rule of law, free markets and cooperation on security matters, OSCE will remain a vibrant and highly relevant organization.

With that said, Mr. Minister, the United States pledges its full support for cooperation with the Luxembourg Presidency and the EU, as well as with all the countries represented around this table. The agenda outlined by our Chair must serve as the basis for our work.

In this year, when we mark the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, we wish to recall the words that all of our ministers endorsed at the Sofia Ministerial last December: "The fulfillment of commitments contained in the Helsinki Final Act and other agreed OSCE documents are the best way to pay tribute to those who struggled for peace, freedom, democracy and human dignity, to commemorate all victims of World War II and to overcome the past."

This, in our view, should be one of our guiding lights as we approach the work of the OSCE in the year ahead.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.