



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to 2nd Committee Chair Sarybay and 3rd Committee Chair Šrámek

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Harry Kamian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
February 7, 2019

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The United States welcomes the distinguished Chairs from the Second and Third Committees. Thank you for your leadership and for promoting a collaborative approach between the committees. A comprehensive approach to security means we must consider threats and opportunities within each dimension. But to ensure long-term peace and stability, we must also think cross-dimensionally. We welcome your efforts in these areas.

Ambassador Sarybay, thank you for discussing and distributing the Second Committee's work plan for 2019. In our view, it presents a balanced approach to addressing priority issues for participating States. In January, the Economic and Environmental Forum (EEF) Preparatory Meeting started with a discussion within your committee on the Slovak Chairmanship's priority issues of energy security, good governance, and the use of digitalization as a tool to address them, in line with the Milan ministerial council declaration. We encourage the Second Committee to contribute further to this conversation between EEFs.

The OSCE has reached consensus on a list of important issues to address. We encourage you to focus on these agreed upon principles and not commit your limited resources to subjects for which consensus does not exist. In the coming year, we anticipate continued OSCE efforts in fighting corruption and organized crime, strengthening the rule of law and good governance, promoting trade and transport, preventing and responding to natural disasters, and advancing energy and economic security. We would welcome more specific details on how you plan to coordinate with the Special Representative on Combating Corruption for more concrete results in the fight against corruption.

Ambassador Šrámek, we appreciate that at last week's Human Dimension Committee (HDC) meeting, you identified human rights and fundamental freedoms as the basis for thematic work in the HDC throughout the year and you advocated using the HDC's work to demonstrate the OSCE's relevance to everyday people. We also agree with your and the Slovak Chairmanship's support for robust civil society participation at OSCE events.

This year is the 30th Anniversary of several momentous events across Europe that have particular resonance in the HDC, including the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of oppressive regimes in Czechoslovakia and many other OSCE participating States. The Velvet Revolution, to which, you, Ambassador, intend to devote an HDC meeting later this year, remains an important example of how non-violent protests can lead to profound,

peaceful, political change. It is also a reminder that an individual's ability to fully exercise his or her human rights and fundamental freedoms, including those of expression and peaceful assembly, is essential to establishing and sustaining open, democratic societies.

We urge the incoming Chair to continue outgoing Ambassador MacLeod's practice of involving the OSCE's independent institutions, field missions, and civil society in HDC discussions. We also support the Chair's encouragement of voluntary reporting, which helps to gauge progress and highlight the continuing implementation challenges that participating States face.

Finally, we encourage continued cooperation between the three PC committees and the corresponding committees of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly; the upcoming OSCE PA Winter Meeting will provide a good opportunity for this.

The United States joins other delegations in expressing its appreciation to the distinguished Chairs for your leadership. Your committees' work embodies the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security.

Thank you.

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