

## United States Mission to the OSCE



### **Session 5: Decision-making process; Role of the Chairmanship; OSCE meetings; Role of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly**

As delivered by Julie Raschka  
OSCE Review Conference  
Vienna, Austria  
October 25, 2010

The United States appreciates the efforts made, especially in 2006, to ensure greater transparency and predictability in consultations and decision-making within the OSCE. The adoption of the Rules of Procedure and the three committee structure have had a positive impact on our work and relations. We believe they achieved an appropriate balance between bureaucratic necessity and flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances. We do not see the need for any modifications at this time, although we do not rule out that they may become necessary at some point in the future.

We believe that the Chair should continue to serve as the political leadership of our organization. As such, the Chair has a particular responsibility for guiding the OSCE response to developments affecting the security and long-term stability of one or more participating States. As we mentioned last Wednesday at the session on the conflict cycle, we believe that the role of the Chair in conflict prevention and crisis management should be enhanced.

The Chair currently has authority to dispatch personal representatives, but it cannot easily create a team of experts to address a wider range of measures that may be needed in crisis situations. Despite the excellent leadership of the Kazakhstani Chair and the good will of all participating States, the crisis in Kyrgyzstan -- and the 2008 conflict in Georgia -- clearly demonstrated the difficulties inherent in the current system.

The input and engagement of NGOs in OSCE meetings is crucial for enhancing the relevance and transparency of the OSCE's work. Since the very beginning of the CSCE, NGOs have been partners in the OSCE's work in all three dimensions. Their work is pivotal in strengthening societies to meet a host of domestic and international challenges. So, it is essential that NGOs continue to be allowed to participate in our meetings. Failure to include NGOs would limit the potential impact and effectiveness of the OSCE in carrying out the commitments to which we all subscribe.

We were extremely disappointed and concerned that some civil society representatives were effectively denied the ability to participate in the Warsaw portion of this Review Conference. Not only was their exclusion unfair to them, it violated OSCE rules, which, per Article IV,

paragraph 16 of Helsinki Document 1992 establish a unique basis for denying registration of any individual or NGO. We are pleased that the consultative process ultimately focused on that single point, and was brought to a satisfactory closure. To allow a single state effectively to block NGO participation for any other reason would gravely injure our fundamental values and the OSCE as an organization.

Like NGOs, the Parliamentary Assembly can play a constructive role in furthering implementation of the OSCE's mandate. We note the positive work being done by the Parliamentary Assembly across the region: in addressing protracted conflicts; in promoting democratic governance, including election assistance to participating States; and in responding to new challenges in connection with migration, energy security, and climate change. We also note the importance of parliamentary capacity building and parliamentary exchanges, particularly in countries of transition. Many OSCE field missions, in fact, already have such programs in place. We hope the Parliamentary Assembly will play a greater role in such programs in future.

In regard to the issue of election observation, the United States continues to believe that the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the ODIHR play critical roles, with each providing unique and necessary expertise. Our Organization is best served when we work together in a spirit of complementary partnership, cooperation, and collaboration.

Thank you, Mr. Moderator.