



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on the United States Becoming an Observer to the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 – 2015

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
February 9, 2012

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

The United States is very pleased to report to the Permanent Council that on Sunday, February 5, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced in Sofia, Bulgaria that the United States is joining the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 as an official observer.

In announcing the decision, Secretary Clinton said: “For too long, Roma citizens have been marginalized and isolated, prevented from contributing their talents and participating in their societies. This is a critical matter of human rights, and it affects millions of men, women, and children across the continent.” The Secretary once again confirmed that helping to promote and protect the inalienable human rights of Roma everywhere is a long-standing personal commitment of hers, and a stated foreign policy priority of the Obama Administration.

The Decade of Roma Inclusion is a unique forum that brings together governments, international organizations, Romani and other civil society groups on this crucial human rights issue that affects millions across Europe. Seven years into the initiative, much work remains to be done. We hope, therefore, that more countries will join the Decade, as members or observers, to implement its core mission of eliminating discrimination and closing the unacceptable gaps between Roma and the rest of society.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.