



## United States Mission to the OSCE

### **Response to the Head of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro, Ambassador Sārūnas Adomavičius**

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
March 8, 2012

The United States welcomes Ambassador Sārūnas Adomavičius to the Permanent Council, and we thank you for your comprehensive report.

We congratulate Montenegro on the progress it has made in 2011, including the European Council's December decision to open accession talks in June 2012 and the World Trade Organization's positive decision on Montenegrin membership. We thank the Mission for its work in partnership with the Government of Montenegro towards implementing the necessary political, social and economic reforms.

Montenegro has made good progress in several key areas. The incorporation of the OSCE/ODIHR recommendations into the amendments to the Law on the Election of MPs and Councilors, including the ensuring of minority and female representation on candidate lists; the Law to Prohibit Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities; and the removal of defamation and insult from the Criminal Code are all undeniable markers of Montenegro's forward movement towards a truly free and stable democracy. They provide a positive example for the region as a whole. The decriminalization of defamation is important to media freedom and freedom of expression, and we encourage all OSCE participating States to consider adopting similar policies. We appreciate the work the Mission has done to strengthen media freedom through cooperation with the court system as well through governmental partnerships.

The Mission's work with the Ministry of Defense and UNDP in continuing the destruction of stockpiles of surplus and unstable Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) helps to ensure the future safety of Montenegro and the region. We urge the Mission to continue its work with the Parliament to implement the OSCE Code of Conduct on politico-military aspects of security. The complementary role of the Mission's work in the Economic and Environmental Dimension through the Aarhus Centers should continue to be used as a vehicle for public access to information and participation in decision making regarding disposal of potentially harmful materials.

We appreciate the Mission's activities in police affairs to combat organized crime, drug trafficking and corruption. The integration of regional actors is the most effective way to address these issues, especially gathering together border police and customs officers. The program on Integrated Border Management Strategy with Serbia, Albania, and Bosnia is a prime example of effective regional cooperation and efficient use of resources. We

encourage all Missions – both in the Western Balkans and in the OSCE region as a whole - to adopt a similar strategy when approaching cross-border issues.

The United States commends the Mission's work in democratization, especially in promoting Roma inclusion and creating lasting solutions for displaced persons. We are also pleased with your Office's coordination with ODIHR on the promotion of gender equality by increasing the representation and participation of women, and with UNICEF in combating domestic violence. Additionally, we thank your team for the assistance it provided in developing a "Manual on Registering NGOs," as no democracy can thrive without a strong, empowered and active civil society.

As Montenegro looks towards full EU accession, the reform of the judiciary and ensuring rule of law as a whole are crucial to achieving that goal. Effective implementation of the Criminal Procedure Code, especially in countering corruption, is a key element of rule of law. The Mission should take pride in its work in this area. As far as the court monitoring project, the Mission has done excellent work assisting Montenegrin institutions in implementing relevant legislation. We encourage the Mission to continue to facilitate the implementation of existing legislation and legislative reforms that address issues of human rights and rule of law.

Ambassador Adomavičius, we thank you again for your commitment to the OSCE Mission to Montenegro, and we wish you a successful 2012.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.