



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Three Committee Chairs

As prepared for delivery by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
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We recognize the heavy responsibility that the Astana Commemorative Declaration has placed on the Lithuanian Chairmanship, which is indicative of the trust the participating States have in Lithuania's capabilities. We strongly support the Chairmanship's pragmatic and constructive approach to fulfilling the Summit taskings. As promised, we will continue to work closely together with the Chairmanship – as well as with the Chairs of the three Committees – to support implementation of the CiO's program of action.

The three Committees are central to our Astana follow-up efforts, as forums for focused dialogue on key issues and to develop consensus on concrete actions that we can take. We welcome and appreciate the substantial presentations offered today by the Heads of the three Committees, and strongly support the Lithuanian Chairmanship's efforts to synergize its work with that of the Permanent Council.

Ambassador Greminger, we appreciate the effort put forth by you, in close cooperation with the Chairmanship, putting together a projected agenda for the Human Dimension Committee that addresses the varying priorities of different stakeholders. We agree with your objectives for the Committee and will work constructively with you and all participating States to achieve them.

We were again disappointed that an event on freedom of assembly and association was not included in the agenda, especially since there is one on freedom of movement; but we believe that these important topics can and will be addressed during Committee meetings, at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, and as an aspect of all human dimension-related meetings during the year.

On the whole, we believe the human dimension events agenda should have had more emphasis on fundamental freedoms. But we also recognize the need to come to agreement sooner rather than later. As stated Tuesday in the Human Dimension Committee, we thus offer our total support to the proposal put forth by the Chairmanship for the package of human dimension events for 2011 and will work constructively to ensure these events are fruitful. I remind my colleagues that the OSCE Rules of Procedure and PC Decision 476 – taken together – require us to reach agreement on these issues by February 1. We urge speedy adoption, also agreeing that the SHDMs will take place as envisioned by the Chairmanship.

Protracted negotiations have limited the effectiveness of the Human Dimension Committee for too long. We, therefore, urge all participating States to come to agreement on the Chair's proposal so that we can get on with the real substantive work of the Committee.

There are a number of disturbing trends in the human dimension that indicate steps backwards in the OSCE region on many of the very principles our Heads of State and Government reaffirmed less than two months ago in Astana. The Human Dimension Committee clearly has a significant role to play in addressing this backsliding and assisting participating States to

improve implementation of their commitments. In this vein, we are particularly pleased with the Lithuanian Chair's priority on media freedom and an event on "safety of journalists," a timely and important topic, indeed. In this regard, we hope to see continued strong cooperation with the office of the OSCE Representative on Media Freedom and her vital work. We also hope to see an approach that takes into account new digital media technologies and the need to ensure that fundamental freedoms – of expression, but also assembly and association - are respected in digital networks and technologies.

Ambassador Horsten, we are pleased to see that a broad understanding and agreement exists on the key issues before your committee, primarily on enhancing the OSCE's contributions to the fight against transnational threats. As our discussions in Astana amply demonstrated, the need and capability is evident for a greater OSCE role on transnational threats. There are two points in this: first, we see this as an issue-based question involving how we can improve the OSCE's contribution to existing work on police matters, fighting terrorism, the illicit financial networks that support it and improving border management. Secondly, we see the usefulness of considering new areas for possible engagement, such as cybersecurity and nonproliferation. We view this as a systematic challenge on how we can improve coordination within the relevant parts of the Secretariat, ensuring that our response not only encompasses relevant first dimension units, but also takes into account other dimensions and the work being done by other organizations and states.

A start on both fronts, in our view, would be to take some initial steps early on to enhance the OSCE's analytical capacity to detect, understand and respond to shifting and growing transnational threats. In this respect, we also see scope for considering new and additional ways in which the OSCE can contribute to assisting Afghanistan.

Ambassador Prokopchuk, the United States is fully supportive of your plans for the economic and environmental dimension. A focus on concrete actions and deliverables, especially in the areas of energy security, good governance and transparency are key goals for the United States, and we are heartened to see those items reflected in the Chair's vision for 2011. Energy security is important to the future stability of the OSCE region and the OSCE has an important role to play in identifying and sharing best practices, as well as to enable OSCE Missions and Institutions to monitor and implement these efforts on the ground.

We must also renew efforts to increase transparency, combat corruption, and establish agreed-upon principles of good governance. In that respect, we continue to believe that the OSCE, joining with other international bodies that have already done so, can play a constructive role in fostering the wide-spread adoption of good governance principles through an OSCE endorsement of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

In the preparation for the Summit, our long and fruitful debates resulted in near-consensus on substantial and balanced measures to be undertaken in the second dimension. We hope that this spirit of cooperation will be preserved and that we can work towards tangible results in 2011 based on those already agreed upon common objectives.

We would urge the Committee Chairs to continue addressing within the individual Committees elements of cross-dimensional issues, such as protracted conflicts and the conflict cycle, that are relevant to their work. We see this as a means to prevent "stovepiping", and to ensure the comprehensiveness of our overall approach to security.

The Committees should also assist in identifying ways to use this organization to promote dialogue and trust, especially where dialogue is almost nonexistent, and enable the OSCE to make a positive contribution on the ground.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.