



## United States Mission to the OSCE

### **Response to Address by the Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council, H. E. Ambassador Hido Biščević**

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
April 14, 2011

We welcome Ambassador Hido Biščević to the Permanent Council and thank you for your comprehensive report on the activities of the Regional Cooperation Council. The Council's role as a leader in Southeastern Europe is evident in the social, political and economic progress we continue to see in the region. The United States is pleased to participate as a member of the Regional Cooperation Council Board and to support RCC activities.

The United States notes the six priority areas of the RCC's work: economic and social development, energy and infrastructure, justice and home affairs, security cooperation, building human capital, and parliamentary cooperation. We support the RCC 2011-2013 work plan activities, in particular those that involve the OSCE, including the Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative, the Women Police Officers Network, and the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative - Regional Centre for Combating Trans-border Crime. We thank you for your personal contribution at the regional workshop on democratic policing organized by the OSCE Strategic Police Matters Unit in Sarajevo last September. It is through such cooperation that progress and development are possible.

We share the view of the European Commission on the continuing importance of cooperation on energy, infrastructure, the fight against corruption and organized crime, promotion of social cohesion, and freedom of expression, as well as in overcoming the effects of the economic crisis. It is in these areas where the OSCE can work with the RCC to move Southeastern Europe forward towards full European integration. We commend your efforts in placing economic reform initiatives within the framework of effecting social progress. We agree that promoting job creation for inclusive economic growth, decent working conditions, and equal opportunities are key priorities for the region. Your comprehensive, cross-dimensional approach is a key component of that progress.

We commend the RCC's work in combating organized crime and corruption in the region, as these activities know no borders. We agree that "an efficient fight against organized crime and terrorism needs to take into account fundamental rights, notably rights pertaining to liberty and security, access to justice, right to a fair trial and to a due process, free legal aid, alternative dispute resolutions, assistance and redress mechanisms for crime victims." OSCE training for those involved in the legal process is an excellent way to support the establishment of a coherent and sustainable system of rule of law.

We welcome RCC efforts towards secure and affordable energy supply and well-developed energy, transport and environmental infrastructures and support services. We appreciate that the global financial crisis, compounded by environmental pressures, has challenged us all in

developing efficient, modern infrastructure. We support OSCE cooperation with the RCC on regional development and ensuring a secure energy supply.

We urge the RCC to increase its efforts to include Kosovo in all of its activities, since inclusiveness is a principle essential to effective regional cooperation.

Most of all, we appreciate the RCC's role in furthering transparency in the region's democratic processes. We agree that genuinely democratic institutions are a prerequisite for political stability, economic development, social cohesion and overall trust and confidence in government. Regional cooperation can also contribute to the crafting of effective laws, which in turn furthers the goal of regional integration and contributes to a framework for open debate.

Thank you again, Ambassador Bišćević, for your presentation here today. We appreciate the work of the RCC and look forward to continued cooperation between our institutions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.