



United States Mission to the OSCE

Concerns Regarding the Russian Federation's Conviction of Estonian Police Officer Eston Kohver

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
September 3, 2015

Nearly one year ago, Estonian police officer Eston Kohver was abducted by members of the Russian Security Services on Estonian territory while carrying out his official duties to prevent transnational crime. On August 19, following repeated extensions of his detention and despite numerous statements in the Permanent Council calling for his release, a Russian court sentenced Mr. Kohver to 15 years in prison on baseless charges of espionage.

Mr. Kohver's case is yet another glaring example of Russia ignoring its international obligations and its OSCE commitments. We are deeply troubled by reports that Mr. Kohver has not received adequate legal representation by his attorney, who was appointed by Russian authorities. Of additional concern is that Mr. Kohver's trial took place behind closed doors, where neither the public nor the Estonian consul were allowed to be present during the judicial proceedings.

We join our colleagues from the European Union and other nations in demanding that the Russian Federation release Mr. Kohver immediately and return him to Estonia unharmed.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.