



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Report by the Director of the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Ambassador Christian Strohal

As prepared for delivery by Chargé d' Affaires Kyle Scott
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 28, 2007

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Strohal, it is always a pleasure to welcome you to the Permanent Council. We look forward to discussing the ODIHR report on Combating Hate Crime and continuing the dialogue on the important issue of tolerance and non-discrimination this afternoon.

ODIHR clearly has an important role to play in helping participating States strengthen their response to hate crimes and other tolerance-related issues. ODIHR's recent effort in creating TANDIS, an information database, provides an important tool to identify and analyze the challenges States face in fighting discrimination and tolerance incidents effectively.

We are glad to hear your report on ODIHR's election observation activities, as well as the review of all of your efforts to fulfill the mandate we gave you at Brussels in Ministerial Decision 19/06. We continue to support ODIHR's activities in upcoming election observations, and follow-up discussions on implementation.

Democratization and human rights remain at the core of ODIHR's objectives. We support ODIHR's steady commitment to these objectives through its long-term programs promoting democratic good governance, and also through your reporting on issues of concern, such as the recent challenges to fundamental freedoms of assembly and association. In this regard, we are perplexed by attempts by some States to remove this issue from the agenda of the upcoming HDIM meetings, given the trends in this area and the rising cry from human rights monitors for greater protections.

It is the responsibility of participating States to implement their OSCE commitments, and we urge all States to take advantage of ODIHR's assistance in this regard. We also believe that participating States should continue to examine the implementation of their commitments, in order to better identify areas for further work.

Ambassador Strohal, the United States commends ODIHR for its excellent work and fully supports you in further strengthening ODIHR's outstanding work in the human dimension.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.