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United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Report by the Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova

As delivered by Ambassador Darrell Owens
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 12, 2026

I would also like to say a few words in my national capacity.

The United States would like to commend the recent 1+1 talks which led to concrete, if incremental, progress. We welcome the mission's commitment to "sustaining this momentum" and re-energizing the 1+1 working group meetings. We see enormous value in the practical cooperation and confidence building the 1+1 process helps foster, while recognizing that broader issues must be addressed to achieve a comprehensive, political settlement.

We also recognize that the biggest obstacle to greater efficiency remains the Mission's six-month mandate, which has resulted from Russia repeatedly blocking the one-year mandate. This shortened mandate forces you to renegotiate staff and procurement contracts twice a year. At the Ministerial Conference in 2025, participating States endorsed the need to reform the OSCE, to bring it back to its core mandate of promoting security cooperation. A six-month mandate adds needless expense, uncertainty, and administrative burden which runs directly contrary to our efforts to reform and refine the work of the OSCE.

Here is our bottom line: The United States supports a standard one-year mandate and calls on all other states to do so, as well. Colleagues, this is an easy win for our reform efforts.

The United States recalls Ministerial Council Decision No. 18/06 on further strengthening the effectiveness of OSCE executive structures and reminds Russia of its commitment to that decision. And we particularly draw attention to the principle that "when the participating State hosting a field operation concurs, the mandate for field operations should be of a one-year duration."

The Russian mission itself in a recent Permanent Council Statement called for the mission to do more to address broader economic concerns and to increase its information sharing with the Permanent Council. It would be extremely difficult for the mission to engage these broader issues and to sustain the momentum towards broader negotiations without a full year mandate.

Last year, in Russia's interpretative statement on the decision extending the mandate by six-months, the Russian delegation noted that the field mission should use all available resources to facilitate the resumption of meaningful work for a long-term and comprehensive political settlement. We agree. The mission should not be distracted by renegotiating personnel contracts every six months.

The mandate is clear, our position is clear: We need to ensure that Ambassador Smith and the team can do the work the Permanent Council expects of it.

To this end, Ambassador Smith, we would like to ask you to describe what the Moldova Mission could accomplish with the extra time and resources saved through a one-year mandate.

Finally, let me close by reiterating that the United States supports Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. We continue to support the OSCE Mission's mandate of assisting a comprehensive political settlement to the Transnistria conflict in all its aspects.

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