



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **On the OSCE's Future and Institutional Challenges**

As delivered by Acting Deputy Secretary of State and Under Secretary for Political Affairs, Ambassador Victoria Nuland to the Reinforced Permanent Council, Vienna  
September 26, 2023

I am here to reiterate the President's, Secretary Blinken's, and the United States' deep and abiding commitment to this organization, to multilateral diplomacy, and to the guiding principles of sovereign equality, inviolability of borders, peaceful settlement of disputes, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. As my Secretary said at the U.N. Security Council last week, with deep regret these are all values that, even as they are central to the U.N. charter, they are central to this organization and the Helsinki Final Act, we find Russia shredding around the world through its vicious aggression in Ukraine, its violations of basic human rights there and its violations of multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions through its engagement in weapons work with Iran, with the DPRK, etc. It is our responsibility as participating States of this organization to hold Russia accountable for this violence and this vicious aggression and for the atrocities and abuses that it commits against the people of Ukraine.

The OSCE has a huge amount to be proud of. Despite the efforts to block its work at every turn, to block its budget, to block the election of a chair, to block its work by consensus, which is its essential strength, this organization has nonetheless found workarounds, found ways to deliver critical support to Ukraine. 31 countries are helping meet its war needs, including through humanitarian demining, which we had a chance to see a couple of weeks ago north of Kyiv; through psychosocial support for children and families and other projects that you are doing, including under the ironically named Moscow Mechanism.

I would also commend the OSCE for the fact that you will have a human dimension meeting in the first two weeks of October. Again, the ability of this organization to bring together civil society activists from across the space to discuss critical issues is an essential function of the OSCE, and it creates this community of common action in defense of the Helsinki Final Act Principles and in defense of U.N. Charter principles. It also gives energy and support and comfort to NGOs across the space, many in countries where they come under threat and come under criticism. So that is a very important piece of work that you are doing. In July, the high-level event that you had on climate change was also an important opportunity to make clear once again that this community of nations considers climate a national security issue, a human issue, a democracy issue, and John Kerry was pleased to attend.

With regard to the obstacles going forward, as I said, we consider it absolutely outrageous that the budget is being blocked for another year, and we call on Russia to stop this blockage. Despite the fact that Russia doesn't pay its dues and is blocking the budget, it still has a seat at the table. We cannot allow it to hold us hostage any further. We support efforts, including the Estonian effort, to find a chair for next year. To remind, we are three months from the end of the year, so this is an issue that needs to be solved. Whether for 2024 or any future chair, we support candidates who will be principled and similarly capable of defending our core values from Russia's relentless assault. We are committed to this.

I'll close here: to meet the challenges of today and the future, the OSCE has got to remain strong and true to its principles and fully engaged in all three interdependent dimensions of security: political/military, economic/environmental, and, especially, the human dimension. This is an instrument that we created for our common security and our common good. As President Biden said at the U.N. last week, we believe in the value and the power of multilateral organizations like this, and we reaffirm today that in the critical activities carried out by the Chair, the Secretariat, the institutions, the field missions and participating States. We need to stand together in support of our principles and our values, and work together towards a more secure future. Minister Osmani, Secretary General Schmidt, the United States stands with you. Our fantastic Ambassador Mike Carpenter stands with you, and we all stand with the OSCE.

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