



United States Mission to the OSCE

Political Tensions in Macedonia

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 5, 2015

The United States continues to follow with concern the unfolding events in Macedonia. We call on authorities to demonstrate their commitment to the rule of law, respect for the freedom of expression, and the integrity of democratic processes in Macedonia.

We note the serious allegations that have called into question the independence of the media and of the judiciary, as well as respect for other basic democratic values that the Government of Macedonia has committed to protect and uphold. We are concerned about undue government influence on media coverage of the current situation and how that may constrain debate on issues of public interest.

The nature of these concerns requires immediate attention by Macedonia's authorities – its citizens deserve and should demand no less. The United States appreciated the visit to Skopje by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities on February 19, and the statement on February 27 by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. The OSCE Mission to Skopje has played an important role in Macedonia's democratic progress, and we hope this will continue. We call on Macedonia's political leaders from all sides to seek out the advice and assistance of the OSCE Mission, the OSCE Secretariat, and the other executive structures of the OSCE in charting a way forward.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.