



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Report by the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Katherine Brucker
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 21, 2024

Ambassador Dzhusupov, welcome back to the Permanent Council in your new role. You have stepped into a role of immense importance, and I know that you have jumped immediately into the rich substance of your broad economic and environmental portfolio, well supported by your terrific team. .

Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine, now over two years long, must remain at the forefront of our agenda. The war has unleashed a humanitarian catastrophe and severely damaged Ukraine's economic stability and environmental health, undermining long-term sustainable development.

The OCEEA has an indispensable role to play in addressing the terrible consequences of Russia's war. Through its targeted activities, the OCEEA is analyzing the extensive economic and environmental damage of this war. This analysis is crucial to developing programs to undo the extensive harm Russia has inflicted and preparing Ukraine for a resilient and prosperous future.

Key initiatives, such as the extra-budgetary project assessing and addressing the environmental fallout of Russia's war, exemplify our collective commitment to Ukraine's recovery. Such efforts require sustained, high-level support within the OSCE. Ambassador Dzhusupov, your report underscores the creative way OCEEA addresses the breadth of challenges facing the OSCE region. The activities you described align with several U.S. priorities, most notably tackling climate change and fighting corruption. We encourage your office to undertake projects that enhance energy security in the face of climate threats, promote governance and improve the business climate through digitalization, and to address the vulnerability to money laundering stemming from virtual assets. The OCEEA's technical expertise is available to all participating States in our efforts to address these challenges.

Ambassador Dzhusupov, we also encourage you to engage with civil society – a key stakeholder along with governments and the private sector. Civil society perspectives and contributions are vital to effectively tackling these immense challenges.

The United States is committed to expanding the scope of the OCEEA's activities across Central Asia, including fighting corruption and enhancing economic connectivity. Central Asia also faces significant climate change risks, making water management and high mountain area preservation particularly vital. Your distinctive perspective, Mr. Coordinator, will help us to execute the right projects effectively, thereby enhancing the region's security, resilience, and economic development.

The United States appreciates the thoughtful planning by Malta and Austria for the 2024 Economic and Environmental Dimension agenda. Following Russia's obstruction of last year's Economic and Environmental Forum, we very much welcome the consensus on this year's EEf agenda to examine matters such as climate change, sustainable development, and digitalization. The United States is eager to contribute our expertise to these crucial topics.

Regarding some of the priorities that you raised, we wholeheartedly support your focus on women's economic empowerment. Countries cannot meet their economic development goals if 50 percent of the population is not fully integrated in the economy. Similarly, your focus on youth: the future of our countries will help ensure that they have a reason to stay in their countries and to work for the further development, rather than go abroad.

Ambassador Dzhusupov, the United States greatly appreciates your office's support for the Chair, the Economic and Environmental Committee, and the overall work of this Organization in the Second Dimension. We extend our best wishes to you for success in your new position - and rest assured, you have our unwavering support.

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