



## United States Mission to the OSCE

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

As delivered by Ambassador Michael Carpenter  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
March 30, 2023

Ambassador Hasani, dear Igli, thank you for your leadership of the OCEEA with impressive vision and concrete results, it is much appreciated. You have our gratitude and thanks for your hard work, but also for that of your team.

It has been 13 months since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine plunged the OSCE region and the world into interlinked humanitarian, economic, environmental, and security crises. We need to better understand – and responds to – the scope of the economic and environmental damage, destruction, and long-term risks stemming from Russia's war against Ukraine.

You clearly recognize the importance of this, and I applaud your team's work to rapidly establish new projects inside Ukraine. OCEEA's extrabudgetary project to assess the environmental impacts of Russia's aggression and explore options for remediation is especially important. Similarly, OCEEA's coordination with international partners and organizations such as UNEP, UNIDO, and UNDP reflects the OSCE's contribution to broader international efforts to address the wide and compounding consequences of Russia's aggression.

As your report shows, despite today's challenges, OCEEA is performing important work. Alongside governments and civil society, you have been promoting shared OSCE values across a range of impactful areas in the region, including energy security and combating corruption. We commend your outreach to enhance the participation of women and youth in these efforts. Their contributions are essential to lasting success.

The United States places a high priority on international partnerships and cooperation to fight corruption as reflected in this week's Summit for Democracy, which we are co-hosting, and where combating corruption and promoting transparent and accountable governance will be featured prominently. The events of 2022 put in stark relief what we already knew: that democratic government, grounded in rule of law and the will of the governed, remains the best tool we have to unleash human potential, maintain international peace and security, grow prosperity, and uphold human dignity.

Of similar importance are your team's activities on good environmental governance, the improved management of natural resources, such as water, and addressing the security implications of climate change. These are critical challenges for all participating States – from Central Asia to North America – and OCEEA's technical assistance is an invaluable asset in our collective efforts to successfully address them. For this reason, Russia's deplorable blocking of the draft decision for the 2023 Economic and Environmental Forum should be viewed for what it is: the cynical obstruction of the Organization's work despite

months of good faith effort by the Chair. The United States fully supports the recent version presented by the Chair, along with 55 other delegations, and strongly agrees with the importance of discussing resilient and inclusive economic growth in light of today's challenges.

Colleagues, it is clear that Russia is trying to undermine this Organization, not just projects in Ukraine. Not just the Third Dimension. The Second Dimension, which has never been politicized to this degree before. And it is Russia alone, the sole participating State that is undermining our shared agenda in this Dimension today. Shameful.

Ambassador Hasani,

Despite this, we commend your leadership and your principled – as well as practical – responses to the unprecedented circumstances we find ourselves in today. We will find a way to move forward. We won't let Russia gut this Organization. You will continue to have our full support.

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