



# United States Mission to the OSCE

## Statement on Kosovo

As delivered by Political Counselor Bruce Connuck  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
October 23, 2003

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is a pleasure to welcome Ambassador Fieschi back to the Permanent Council today. We commend the excellent work done by Ambassador Fieschi and the staff of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo and we pledge our full support to the Mission's priorities.

We are pleased that the beginning of a direct dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade took place in Vienna on October 14. This was an important step forward for regional relations. We encourage both sides to fully participate in the follow-on working group discussions on issues important to citizens in both Serbia and Kosovo.

The United States supports the full implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and the "standards before status" policy for Kosovo. We believe the OSCE Mission has played, and should continue to play, a vital role as part of UNMIK, in developing multiethnic, democratic institutions in Kosovo.

In particular, the OSCE's activities in the fields of police training, rule of law, political party development, and parliamentary support have been invaluable. There has been significant progress in these areas, and while more work is needed to continue to build the capacity of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, OMIK deserves commendation for its efforts to develop and assist the PISG.

We welcome the OSCE Mission in Kosovo's activities to promote and support the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. Despite a number of despicable violent incidents this summer, returns in 2003 have continued at a higher pace than in previous years, and are up 22 percent over this time last year. More must be done to create conditions for sustainable returns, including improving freedom of movement and security, to ensure that refugees and IDPs have a real incentive to return.

We also welcome the progress made in turning over certain responsibilities for election administration to local control, as highlighted in the Mission's October 8 Spot Report. We hope that progress continues at a reasonable pace to build local capacity in preparation for the Fall 2004 elections.

The United States remains committed to a multiethnic, democratic Kosovo. Violence of any nature will not be tolerated, and we continue to call upon all Kosovars to speak out against violence and discrimination. We encourage all Kosovars to participate constructively in building a path toward Kosovo's integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions. The OSCE has helped to lay

the foundation for this future and now, along with the people of Kosovo and the international community, must ensure that progress continues.

Mr. Chairman, we once again thank Ambassador Fieschi for coming to the Permanent Council today. We pledge our continuing support for the OSCE Mission in Kosovo and the dedicated staff who carry out the Mission's mandate.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.