



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Ukraine

As delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 2, 2003

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It gives us special pleasure to welcome Ambassador Nicholas back to Vienna and are always very much impressed and taken with his enthusiasm and dedication that he brings to his work.

Ambassador Nicholas has presented us with an ambitious plan to assist and cooperate with Ukraine in a number of important areas including elections, media freedom, rule of law, combating trafficking, and economic projects. His proposal is based not only on a vision of what needs to be done, but with knowledge of what others are doing so we can best see where the OSCE brings true value added. We know this because he has created a database that allows a comparison of the action plans of the international community and the NGOs. This achievement, consistent with his role as Coordinator, has allowed his office to organize and better focus its work. In an age of dwindling resources, it also will similarly assist international donors in efforts to complement and not duplicate the work of others.

Focusing on his Office's activities, we strongly support the creation of an election unit. We are convinced that next year's Presidential Election represents a significant opportunity for Ukraine. Ambassador Nicholas has presented us with a strong plan to maximize the contribution OSCE institutions and his Office can make in assisting Ukraine to seize this opportunity. We applaud both the Office and Ukraine for their shared commitment to working together to this end.

We also welcome the approach his office has taken in terms of assisting in the development of small and medium sized enterprises. His proposal is guided by an awareness of what major contributors are doing and a desire to fill gaps that his Office and Ukrainian officials have identified. We believe the Office's Rule of Law Unit can also play a helpful role in this field as respect for the rule of law strengthens entrepreneurial opportunities.

We support the Office's work with Ukrainian authorities to combat trafficking in Ukraine as well as its contribution to a comprehensive assessment of trafficking in the region.

Mr. Chairman, in closing, we commend the Office and Ukraine for the cooperation that characterizes the activities outlined in Ambassador Nicholas report. We believe such cooperation carries the potential to serve as a model for other offices. We welcome future reports on the achievements that such cooperation produces.

Thank you.