



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Statement in Response to the OSCE Head of Mission in Serbia and Montenegro, Ambassador Massari**

As delivered by Deputy Representative Douglas Davidson  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
March 11, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is a pleasure to welcome Ambassador Massari back to the Permanent Council today, and to hear his detailed presentation both on the current political situation in Serbia and Montenegro and on the activities of his Mission. The OSCE Mission continues to do important work in Serbia and Montenegro; it has the full support of the United States government.

We are pleased to hear that the positive spirit of cooperation between the OSCE Mission and the Serbian and Montenegrin authorities continues. Our shared aims of democratization, economic development, and regional stability should continue to define and to maintain this productive relationship.

Many of our policy priorities in Serbia and Montenegro are being addressed by Mission activities. OSCE efforts in the field of rule of law have resulted in better training for judges and prosecutors, improved legislation, and the creation of the Montenegrin Ombudsperson Institution. More needs to be done, however, to ensure that the judicial system functions independently and is accountable to the public.

The progress that has begun in the field of defense reform needs to be completed. The Mission's work, through the Parliamentary Support Program, to establish parliamentary oversight of the military is important; it should continue.

Regarding media reform, we support the Mission's plans to host training seminars on investigative reporting for journalists in Serbia and Montenegro. Other issues will also require the Mission's engagement, including the decriminalization of libel and the resolution of the problems surrounding the Serbian Broadcasting Agency. The Mission should also continue its activities in the economic and environmental dimension, particularly in South Serbia.

Mr. Chairman, please allow me to now turn to more political issues.

In Montenegro, we are concerned that the functioning of democratic institutions continues to be hampered by the limited participation of opposition parties. We urge the

governing coalition and opposition to look for ways to work together constructively to end the boycott and to bring Montenegro's constitution in line with the State Union Constitutional Charter.

The implementation of the new Criminal Code and Criminal Procedure Code, as well as the OSCE and Council of Europe's recommendations related to trafficking in persons, should also be carried out in Montenegro.

The new Serbian government faces a number of challenges as it takes power and determines its priorities for action. The development of a new Serbian Constitution, the fight against organized crime, and the establishment of a genuine dialogue with Pristina on technical issues, are three of the key challenges that must be addressed. We also encourage the Government to continue efforts to improve minority rights and ethnic reconciliation.

We are pleased with the new government's decision to eliminate the 50 percent voter turnout requirement for Presidential elections, in accordance with ODIHR recommendations. We have repeatedly called on the Serbian authorities to take this step in our statements to the Permanent Council, and we hope that the change will result in a valid Presidential election this June.

The United States also urges the new government to fulfill its international obligation to cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Serbia and Montenegro's full and unconditional cooperation with ICTY, which includes the arrest and transfer of at-large indictee Ratko Mladic to The Hague, is a necessary step toward integration into Euro-Atlantic structures.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I should like to reiterate our support for the excellent work being done by Ambassador Massari and his staff. We look forward to continuing fruitful cooperation between the OSCE and Serbia and Montenegro, first and foremost through Serbia and Montenegro's new Ambassador here in Vienna.

I thank you.