



## United States Mission to the OSCE

### **Response to OSCE Project Coordinator in Uzbekistan, Antti Karttunen**

As delivered by Chargé d’Affaires, Kate Rebholz  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
May 14, 2026

Ambassador Karttunen, dear Antti, welcome back.

The United States is committed to ensuring international bodies take a hard and overdue look at their impact, use of resources, and relevance to today’s most pressing challenges. We appreciate early efforts taken to address the bloated budget and to eliminate any wasteful spending and staffing. These focused reductions are a step in the right direction to strip costly travel, unnecessary procurements, and lower-value activities that drained resources from more mission-critical work. As we look to the 2027 program outline, we expect that your budget request will reflect pragmatic and results-oriented work on border security, cybersecurity, counterterrorism, and supporting implementation of Uzbekistan’s governance reforms - not on harmful and irrelevant ideological issues. The indiscriminate prioritization of gender ideology, DEI, climate change, or other “woke” concepts over core functions or sound practices must end.

In your role as Project Coordinator in Uzbekistan, you have a critical responsibility to ensure Uzbekistan becomes capable of disrupting security threats and holding criminals and threat actors accountable for their crimes, including corrupt officials. These are commendable efforts, but we also need to see results. We look forward to learning about the concrete, measurable outcomes achieved in training investigative judges and prosecutors to fight crime and end torture. We look forward to seeing prosecution data, traffickers arrested, and corrupt officials exposed.

Criminal justice outcomes and improved security have a positive spill-over effect to attract greater investment and economic growth. More work is to be done to help Uzbekistan strengthen institutions, reduce vulnerabilities to illicit finance, combat cybercrime, improve conditions for trade and investment, and expand economic opportunity.

Your report shows the value of a lean field presence that works with national institutions improving the connections between them and citizens, understands local needs, and delivers targeted assistance across all three OSCE dimensions. We support the Project Coordinator’s work to strengthen border management, cybercrime investigations, digital evidence handling, and regional dialogue on peace and security, including through the Fergana Peace Forum and Central Asian Expert Forum. This is the kind of practical field work that helps participating States address shared threats and promotes stability without building unnecessary bureaucracy.

With the adoption of a Unified Budget, the OSCE has demonstrated the possibility that it can reform itself and become relevant, even in times of crisis. A capable OSCE is better equipped to achieve real priorities of preventing conflict and promoting security and

prosperity for citizens. We look forward to continuing to work with our leadership at OSCE's field operations and in Vienna, to ensure OSCE is lean, effective, results-oriented, and corresponds to U.S. national interests.

Dear Antti, thank you again for your disciplined focus on practical, results-oriented work. Let's build on that.

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