



# HELSINKI COMMISSION HEARING

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UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON  
SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

## Testimony :: Hon. Christopher H. Smith

Co-Chairman - Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and welcome to our witnesses and everyone joining us this morning. Twenty years ago the Balkans were in a crisis – war and genocide – that caused many of us, in Congress and on this Commission, to think about how to respond to the human needs those crises created. Today we think of the crisis as being in Ukraine – and of course it is there too.

But many of the issues that drove our concern for the Balkans in the 19990s are still there today. War and genocide are not among them, and for that we are thankful.

But in Bosnia and Kosovo, a generation of young people still struggles to find work and provide for their families. These states continue to be plagued by ethnic rivalries, and serve their citizens very poorly.

One of the ways we can help these countries stabilize, and to develop functional economic and legal systems, is to include them in the Atlantic community. At the Commission's last hearing on the Balkans, which I chaired in January 2012, we focused on NATO and the lead-up to the NATO Summit in Chicago later that year. At the time, other commissioners and I urged our government to put enlargement on the table. This was not done, but many of us in Congress still urge enlargement in the lead-up to the summit this September in the United Kingdom. The Helsinki Commission has worked with the State Department and others to encourage aspiring countries to undertake the reforms necessary for Euro-Atlantic and European integration. When they do undertake these reforms, as Macedonia and Montenegro have done, I believe the response should be an invitation, not a delay.

I also look forward to a conversation about trafficking. The Western Balkan countries are making little progress in fighting this human tragedy. Except for Macedonia, which seems able to sustain its Tier 1 status in the State Department rankings, others are at Tier 2 or, in the case of Albania, Tier 2 Watch List. Bosnia and Croatia both dropped from Tier 1 just a few

years ago.

While we await updated rankings in this year's report, I want to urge the countries to do more to combat this criminal activity. Trafficking victimizes their citizens, including in many cases children, and reveals shortcomings in law enforcement, the judicial system and border control. I hope to hear particularly from our State Department witness today what the United States is doing to help correct this problem.