



“Germany’s Chairmanship of the OSCE: Priorities and Challenges”

Sen. Roger Wicker

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Thank you, Chairman Smith. I join you in welcoming His Excellency Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier before the Helsinki Commission. I appreciate having the Foreign Minister’s views and expertise as the Commission works to formulate U.S. policy regarding the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

For 40 years, the OSCE has worked to bolster security, democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. In recent decades, Europe has faced major changes, crises, and conflicts. These have included the fall of communism, the war in the former Yugoslavia, and the war on international terrorism. In addition to the continued terrorism threat, OSCE today must contend with new and ongoing challenges, such as the migration crisis, human trafficking, a resurgent anti-Semitism, protecting other minority groups, and corruption in government.

As a 57-member organization that operates by consensus, the OSCE is also not without internal challenges. Russia has attempted to redefine European borders through force. It has tried to use the power of veto and the power of the purse to paralyze the OSCE’s mission. These brazen actions should be addressed in a meaningful way. There are also differing views among OSCE members on how to address the unprecedented migration of refugees into Europe.

Mr. Foreign Minister, Germany’s chairmanship of the OSCE comes at a critical time in history. I wish you every success, and I look forward to your insights and counsel on how we can make a better world for future generations throughout the OSCE region.

Thank you.