

Chairmanship: Ukraine

939th PLENARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

1. Date: Thursday, 31 January 2013

Opened: 10.05 a.m.
Closed: 1.20 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador I. Prokopchuk

Prior to taking up the agenda, the Chairperson, on behalf of the Permanent Council, expressed condolences to Kazakhstan in connection with the plane crash that had occurred near Almaty, Kazakhstan, on 29 January 2013.

3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 1: PRESENTATIONS BY THE CHAIRPERSONS OF THE SECURITY COMMITTEE; THE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE; AND THE HUMAN DIMENSION COMMITTEE

Chairperson of the Security Committee (PC.DEL/54/13 OSCE+), Chairperson of the Economic and Environmental Committee (PC.DEL/55/13 OSCE+), Chairperson of the Human Dimension Committee (PC.DEL/57/13 OSCE+), Chairperson, Ireland-European Union (with the acceding country Croatia; the candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Montenegro and Serbia; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and San Marino, in alignment) (PC.DEL/38/13), United States of America (PC.DEL/43/13), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/60/13 OSCE+), Switzerland (PC.DEL/37/13 OSCE+), Holy See (PC.DEL/50/13), Tajikistan (PC.DEL/51/13), Canada (PC.DEL/63/13 OSCE+)

Agenda item 2: REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES

- (a) *Human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons in the Russian Federation*: Ireland-European Union (with the acceding country Croatia; the candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Montenegro and Serbia; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Georgia, in alignment) (PC.DEL/40/13), United States of America (PC.DEL/45/13), Canada (also on behalf of Norway and Switzerland) (PC.DEL/64/13 OSCE+), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/62/13), Holy See
- (b) *Discrimination against Roma and Sinti in the OSCE area*: United States of America (PC.DEL/47/13), Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria (PC.DEL/59/13)
- (c) *Recent attacks on individuals of Armenian descent in Istanbul, Turkey*: Armenia, Turkey
- (d) *International Holocaust Remembrance Day on 27 January 2013*: Chairperson, United States of America (PC.DEL/44/13), Ireland-European Union (with the acceding country Croatia; the candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Montenegro and Serbia; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association country Liechtenstein, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and San Marino, in alignment) (PC.DEL/39/13), Belgium (Annex), Canada (PC.DEL/65/13 OSCE+), San Marino (PC.DEL/56/13), Hungary (PC.DEL/42/13), Holy See (PC.DEL/49/13), Norway (PC.DEL/41/13), Turkey (PC.DEL/48/13), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/61/13), Germany, Latvia (PC.DEL/52/13), Israel (Partner for Co-operation)
- (d) *Response to a statement made by the United States of America at the 938th meeting of the Permanent Council on Martin Luther King Jr. Day*: Austria

Agenda item 3: REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE

Announcement of the distribution of the report on the activities of the Chairperson-in-Office (CIO.GAL/13/13): Chairperson

Agenda item 4: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

- (a) *Meeting of the OSCE Secretary General with the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, Ms. M. Wahlström, on 30 January 2013*: Secretary General (SEC.GAL/13/13 OSCE+)

- (b) *Visit of the Secretary General to Tashkent on 22 and 23 January 2013:* Secretary General (SEC.GAL/13/13 OSCE+)
- (c) *Extension of the deadline for applications for the position of Head of the Community Security Initiative:* Secretary General (SEC.GAL/13/13 OSCE+)

Agenda item 5: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *Death of Mr. M. Kampelman, former Ambassador of the United States of America to the CSCE:* United States of America (PC.DEL/46/13), Germany
- (b) *The “5+2” negotiation format for the settlement of the Transdniestrian conflict:* Germany (PC.DEL/58/13 OSCE+), Moldova
- (c) *Observation of the presidential elections in Armenia, to be held on 18 February 2013:* OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, United States of America
- (d) *Presidential elections in Montenegro, to be held on 7 April 2013:* Montenegro
- (e) *Selection process for the position of High Commissioner on National Minorities:* Chairperson

4. Next meeting:

Thursday, 7 February 2013, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council

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Annex

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939th Plenary Meeting

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STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF BELGIUM

Mr. Chairperson,

Last Sunday, 27 January 2013, was the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp, and this date has been observed for many years as the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust. While I associate myself fully, of course, with the statement of Ms. Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the European Union (EU), and the EU statement just made on the subject, I also wanted to address the Council briefly on behalf of my country on this topic, which the Belgian Government considers extremely important.

Belgium has held since March 2012, and will hold for a few more weeks, the chairmanship of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, an intergovernmental organization initiated in 1998, which takes as its basis the Stockholm Declaration adopted in the year 2000. It therefore wishes to associate itself, more particularly at this date and during this year, with the important obligation to remember the innumerable victims of this particularly tragic period in our common history, which saw more than 6 million Jews, but also Roma and Sinti, political prisoners, homosexuals and others, persecuted, brutalized and murdered.

Together with many others, I see the date of 27 January as a still essential reminder of the universal lessons of the Holocaust and of the absolute need to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, religion or language, and I particularly appreciate the opportunity given to me today to emphasize this vital message within our security organization, which itself rightly attaches so much importance to the values of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for human dignity and human rights, in the interests of the very well-being of its populations and their development in full harmony.

Since March 2012, the Belgian Government has done its utmost, within the International Alliance but also at home, to foster continual progress in the many areas of work required to ensure that the memory of the victims of the Shoah is honoured, including education (particularly among young people) and research, and in the protection and promotion of human rights and the combating of all forms of racism, anti-Semitism and extremism. As we all know, this is a particularly difficult and demanding task, requiring much patience, but one that is extremely important and well worth the effort.

Thus in December 2012, in Liège, the 31 member States of the Alliance, in the presence of four observer countries and several affiliated international organizations, agreed on a number of important decisions to guide the future work of the Alliance.

Mr. Chairperson,

As we are reminded by the theme for the International Day adopted this year by the United Nations – “Rescue during the Holocaust: The Courage to Care” – there were men and women, even during the black years of the Holocaust, one of the most sombre periods in our history, in Belgium as well as in a large number of other countries, who had the courage not to remain indifferent in the face of the injustice inflicted on their neighbours and fellows. Often risking their own lives, these individuals courageously protected and saved, or tried to protect and save, many children, women and men. May the memory of their actions and courage in the service of the most noble human values, along with that of others before them and after them, continue to be a source of inspiration for us all!

While Belgium, like many other countries, will continue its unrelenting efforts to honour the duty of remembrance, we are also convinced that the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, in co-operation notably with the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and other affiliated international organizations, will continue to make valuable contributions to the common objective under its future Canadian chairmanship. Canada will take up the torch in March 2013 and can count on our full support.

I should be grateful, Mr. Chairperson, if this statement could be attached to the journal of the day.