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Delegation of Switzerland

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF SWITZERLAND AT THE
945th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

21 March 2013

On the occasion of International Francophone Day

Madam Chairperson,

I am speaking on behalf of all the OSCE participating States that are members, associate members or observers of the International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF).

On the day after International Francophone Day, Switzerland would like to recall that in many francophone countries or countries that share the French language we celebrated the holiday of the French-speaking communities. Switzerland would like therefore to emphasize the importance of this holiday, which celebrates on 20 March each year the French language and the values of solidarity and a dialogue of cultures within the French-speaking communities. Let us not forget that more than half of the OSCE participating States are affiliated with the OIF. Fifteen OSCE participating States are full members of that organization, while 15 others have observer status. Several OSCE Partners for Co-operation are also members. It is for this reason that we regard respect for multilingualism within the OSCE as one of the Organization's assets.

Switzerland, which held the presidency of the OIF from 2010 to 2012, hosted the 18th OIF summit in Montreux in 2010, a meeting devoted to the challenges of and visions for the future of the French-speaking communities. That summit coincided with the 40th anniversary of the founding of the OIF, which today numbers 77 member States, associate members and observers, and resulted in the 2010 Montreux Declaration.

Today we should like to bring to the attention of the Permanent Council two aspects of the OIF's work that are also relevant for the OSCE. The first Global Forum of Francophone Women was held yesterday (20 March) in Paris. This meeting, which was organized by the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs in co-operation with the OIF, brought together 400 women from civil society around the world with the aim of protecting women's rights. The OIF, just like the OSCE, has always endeavoured to ensure greater equality between men and women. On this basis, in 2000 all the members of the OIF adopted the Luxembourg Declaration, which reaffirms the fundamental right of women to participate in political and public life, to have access to education, training and the labour market, and to contribute to the economic and sustainable development of nations. This is

also why the OIF member States attach great importance to combating violence against women and why they have just adopted, on the fringes of the 57th Commission on the Status of Women held in New York and as a follow-up to their 2010 declaration on the subject, an important action plan aimed at preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls in the OIF member countries. One can only welcome this new development and the OSCE conference that has just been held in Adelaide with the OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation on the subject of how best to improve the security of women and girls.

Furthermore, we welcome the organization of the third International Congress on Cybercrime by the International Francophone Police Training Network (FRANCOPOL), which will take place on 8 and 9 May 2013 in Quebec. This symposium will focus on the subject of sharing our know-how across borders and will address important issues for the OSCE such as prevention, investigative tools, cyberbullying, new trends in cybercrime and measures to combat the exploitation of children on the Internet.

In conclusion, we should like to reiterate that in addition to sharing the French language the OIF member States also share such values as the promotion of peace, democracy and human rights, conflict prevention, cultural and linguistic diversity, equality and social justice along with regulatory mechanisms and ethics in the economic and financial sectors, values that are also shared by the OSCE participating States.

Thank you.