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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANVAR AZIMOV,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

9 September 2010

In response to the report by Brigadier General Costanzo Periotto

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for Article IV, Annex 1-B, of the Dayton Peace Accords, Brigadier General Costanzo Periotto. As regards the report we have just heard, we should like to stress the following points.

As a guarantor of the Dayton Peace Accords and a member of the Contact Group, Russia attaches great importance to the implementation of the Florence Agreement on Subregional Arms Control within the framework of Article IV of the Dayton package, considering it to be an effective instrument for maintaining stability and security and strengthening confidence in the Western Balkans.

On the whole, we share Brigadier General Periotto's positive assessments regarding the implementation of the aforementioned Agreement. Fourteen years after the document's entry into force, the verification and arms control process in the Western Balkans is, in our view, proceeding most successfully.

Positive trends are confirmed in full measure both by the statistics regarding the arms reductions carried out by the parties to the Agreement and the high level of confidence achieved. It is worth mentioning that the participants in this arms control regime are voluntarily making further reductions that are considerably lower than the "ceilings" established in 1996.

This has been possible largely thanks to the efforts of the parties themselves – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia and Montenegro. Special credit also goes to the Personal Representative, who has patiently and carefully helped the Balkan countries in their elaboration of joint solutions. We firmly believe that the settlement of any inter-ethnic disagreements is possible only through similar consensus-based steps, without any formulas being imposed from the outside. This is in fact the key to the peaceful and good-neighbourly coexistence of different peoples.

The aforementioned achievements have, in our view, created the necessary preconditions for the further transfer to the parties of authority for monitoring arms control. We value highly the results of the first phase of this process. The Balkan States, primarily Bosnia and Herzegovina, which had been chairing the Subregional Consultative Commission, and Montenegro, which replaced it this year, have demonstrated great effectiveness in safeguarding the work of the arms control regime and independently performing the functions and responsibilities received from the office of the Personal Representative. This example is once again a sign of the political maturity of all the countries of the region without exception and shows that they are capable of taking responsibility for their own future.

We support the readiness of the States Parties to the Agreement to begin discussions on the modalities of the second and final phase of the process of transferring responsibility in the area of regional arms control, which envisages the closing down of the office of the Personal Representative and the end of international monitoring of the arms control regime. We trust that this process will be carried out gradually and with full account taken of the capabilities and wishes of the States Parties to the Agreement. This kind of approach was also set out in the statement by the Contact Group distributed during the seventh Review Conference held in July to assess the implementation of the parties' commitments under Article IV of the Dayton Peace Accords.

In conclusion, allow me, Mr. Chairperson, to wish Brigadier General Periotto and his staff continued success in their work to help strengthen security and stability on the Balkan Peninsula.

Thank you for your attention.