



***STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR TACAN İLDEM,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY***

***IN RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR PATRICIA FLOR
EU SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR CENTRAL ASIA***

947TH PERMANENT COUNCIL

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Thank you Mr. Chairperson,

I would like to join the previous speakers in warmly welcoming Ambassador Flor to the Permanent Council and would like to thank her for her comprehensive presentation.

After listening to Ambassador Flor, I noticed with great pleasure that priority areas enlisted in EU Strategy for cooperation with Central Asia are similar to those embraced by Turkey. Regional security and stability, economic cooperation, energy, water management and environmental concerns, fight against human and drug trafficking, collective response against common challenges originating from immediate vicinity, upholding the rule of law, transparency and human rights are just a few to name in this respect.

The Central Asian peoples with which we have deep rooted bonds, are going through the most intense and comprehensive process of transformation in their history. Today, Central Asia is an active, determining and directive region. The Central Asian countries are in a position to exert their remarkable historical and geopolitical influence on a global scale. The multi-folded, political, cultural and economic transformation they are undergoing needs to be correctly assessed and their psychological and socio-cultural characteristics duly taken into account. Their future will be shaped not only by their achievements thus far but also by their ability to deal with the existing challenges.

We believe that the OSCE is uniquely positioned to extend its cooperation to countries of the region to help face challenges originating from these transformation processes as well as those of a more global nature. Our organization with its cross dimensional approach is making available its tool box in this regard. It can also encourage regional cooperation and ownership as well as enhance coordination and cooperation with all relevant parties involved all across the region. This is particularly valid for engagement with Afghanistan as it has been referred to during the presentation.



Approaches directed to the region should have a future-oriented vision and based on rational strategic planning that draws on serious analysis of the realities on the ground at multiple levels. Having said this, contributions of the OSCE should continue to be on a voluntary basis, in close cooperation with the host countries of the region. The pace and content of the cooperation, its institutional form, possible adjustments to it, should be first and foremost guided by host countries themselves. This is deriving from the nature of the OSCE which is not a supranational entity, where its organs are acting upon devolution of power.

There have been positive developments in Central Asia in terms of the spread and institutionalization of democratic values and structures and we should all support further steps in this area. As my Norwegian colleague stated, progress cannot be achieved overnight. Therefore, we need to be patient and committed in this process. We should refrain from focusing on certain regions of the OSCE area as issues related to our commitments is not specific to any particular region or area. Indeed in an ever evolving world, the comprehensive approach to security of the OSCE is valid equally from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

Mr. Chairperson.

Turkey will stand by the Central Asian republics and maintain its support at bilateral, regional and international levels.

Finally, I would like to thank Ambassador Floor once again for her contribution to our debate today and wish her our best in her future endeavors.

Thank you.