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

10 June 2011

**Regarding the statement by Mr. Jan Lundin,
Director General of the International Secretariat of the Council of the
Baltic Sea States**

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank the Chairmanship for inviting Mr. Jan Lundin, the Director General of the International Secretariat of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), to the Permanent Council meeting.

We listened with interest to the detailed information he gave us on the activities of this key organization for intergovernmental co-operation in the Baltic region. It is noteworthy that Mr. Lundin spoke immediately following the 16th CBSS Ministerial Session in Oslo on 7 June at which a Russian delegation led by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov played an active part. We note with particular pleasure that the heads of the Russian and Norwegian foreign ministries exchanged the instruments of ratification for the Treaty between the Russian Federation and the Kingdom of Norway concerning Maritime Delimitation and Cooperation in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean on the eve of that meeting. This Treaty's entry into force will open up significant opportunities for co-operation of the two countries in the energy sector.

In our view, the decisions on increasing the effectiveness of the CBSS were among the positive results of the Oslo session. This is yet another convincing example of the fact that reform is not some kind of taboo for international organizations that want to adapt realistically to changing conditions. We at the OSCE should not be afraid of this either and should consistently take steps to adjust the existing mechanisms.

During the session, the CBSS Member States worked actively on drawing up a unifying agenda. As Sergey Lavrov stressed in his speech at the session, "our common task is to use the tools we have as effectively as possible to bring the region to the forefront in terms of adopting environmentally clean technologies, increasing energy efficiency and ensuring stable and sustainable growth".

Russia considers the liberalization of visa requirements in the Baltic region, which will have a positive impact on business, scientific, educational, cultural and tourism ties, to be an increasingly pressing issue. The Agreement on the Facilitation of Mutual Travel for Border Residents of Russia and Norway signed in 2010 can serve as a good example. We hope that similar agreements will be reached with Poland and also with Lithuania in the very near future. All this would contribute to facilitating freedom of movement and increasing people-to-people contacts, and consequently to strengthening a common pan-European space.

As you know, the CBSS presidential baton has been passed from Norway to Germany, and Russia will assume the presidency next year. This is a particular honour for our country, since the CBSS will be celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2012. We sincerely hope for the strengthening of Baltic co-operation, the objectives for which were set out in the political declaration adopted in Vilnius in 2010.

Mr. Lundin, we wish you every success in achieving that goal.