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Canadian Delegation to the
Organization for Security & Cooperation
in Europe



Délégation du Canada auprès de
l'Organisation pour la sécurité et la coopération
en Europe

**DELEGATION OF CANADA TO THE OSCE
RESPONSE TO ADDRESS BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF KAZAKHSTAN
H.E. MR. KASSYMZHOMART TOKAEV
631ST PLENARY MEETING OF PERMANENT COUNCIL
27 OCTOBER 2006**

Canada joins other Delegations in welcoming His Excellency Foreign Minister Kassymzhomart Tokaev to today's Special Permanent Council. We wish to thank him for his comprehensive and insightful presentation.

We take a significant interest in the direction and the implementation of democratic and economic reforms in Kazakhstan and continue to follow developments related to the Kazakh bid for the OSCE Chairmanship in 2009.

We appreciate Foreign Minister Tokaev's detailed description today, regarding Kazakhstan's proposed priorities if it were to hold the 2009 OSCE Chairmanship.

As Canada has stated numerous times, we are committed to supporting a Chairmanship candidacy from any of the OSCE's participating States. The diversity found within this Organisation is one of its significant strengths.

Similarly, we have frequently underlined our commitment to a Chairmanship that reflects the values and standards of the OSCE. These values and standards, agreed to by consensus by all 56 participating States, are another significant strength of the OSCE.

We value the fact that the OSCE is a comprehensive security organisation which is founded on respect for human rights and the promotion of democracy.

If human rights and democratic practices are to be fully respected, political systems need to be based on free and fair elections. Political processes also must be transparent and responsive to the will of citizens. In addition, legal systems must be fair and impartial and respect the rights of the individual.

Civil society should not face restrictions that limit the ability of individuals to associate freely and express themselves in a peaceful manner. Likewise, media should enjoy the right to work in a professional manner unencumbered by fear of governmental repression.

Respect for diversity is also an important component of comprehensive security.

These are the characteristics that Canada would like to see present in a country seeking the OSCE Chairmanship.

At the same time, we recognise that democracy is not a static system of governance and that democratic development is a process that takes time.

However, Canada feels it is necessary that a Chairmanship candidate demonstrate very tangible efforts at implementing the democratic commitments made by all OSCE participating States.

We again thank the Foreign Minister for addressing us today on Kazakhstan's commitment to the OSCE.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.