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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 2010

**In response to Mr. Antonio Milošoski,
Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the former
Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**

Mr. Chairperson,
Minister,

We listened with great interest to your statement, in which you explained in detail the priorities of the Macedonian chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and proposals for strengthening co-operation with the OSCE.

We agree that the role of the Council of Europe in the construction of a common legal space on our continent is truly priceless. Over the last ten years a substantial set of pan-European legally binding conventions have been drafted by the institution in Strasbourg and it is these very documents that have also unified humanitarian and human rights aspects of this area. This has provided the Council of Europe with genuine possibilities for becoming a powerful humanitarian support for the new European security architecture. Unfortunately, it has not so far been possible to create a solid foundation of this sort in the area of “hard security” because of the absence of a really collective organization with an international legal personality. We hope that in due course the OSCE, like the Council of Europe, will attain this fully fledged status with a charter and other required attributes of a regional organization.

We welcome the desire of the Macedonian chairmanship to fill the Council of Europe agenda with a wide range of topical issues and a solid set of measures. We are confident that it will maintain the continuity of previous chairmanships in ensuring consensus as a core principle of the work of the Committee of Ministers with account taken of the interests of all European countries.

We agree to a large extent with the priorities in the Committee of Ministers that you mention. One of them, strengthening the protection of human rights, is closely linked with improving the work of the European Court of Human Rights. It is clear that the reform of the Court will succeed only if the full weight of decisions on human rights issues is transferred from Strasbourg to the national courts.

There is a second urgent priority, namely assistance in the integration process while observing the various ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious differences. In this context, we welcome the conference held in Skopje on 7 and 8 June to discuss problems of integration of national minorities with a particular focus on their effective participation in the decision-making process in the countries in which they live.

We agree with you that there is potential in the Council of Europe and the OSCE for increasing co-operation in this area. We believe that the two organizations are likely to be confronted by critical problems such as mass statelessness, difficulties experienced by members of national minorities in exerting their socio-economic rights and the rise in manifestations of xenophobia and neo-Nazism. Both the Council of Europe and the OSCE are obliged to take every possible measure to resolve these problems.

One further area of joint efforts should be to overcome all remaining visa obstacles in Europe that stand in the way of the creation of a truly pan-European space and the assertion of the fundamental right to freedom of movement. We believe that both organizations could provide real assistance in resolving this problem, which directly affects the interests of millions of citizens of countries making up the Council of Europe and the OSCE.

We are also impressed by the priority given to the role of young people in public life, particularly in the countries of south-eastern Europe. It is important not only to involve the young generation in public life but also to give them the whole truth about European history and the events of the Second World War, without which it will not be possible to safeguard the stability of our continent. In this connection Russia has proposed organizing under the auspices of the Council of Europe of "European routes of memory of World War II". We hope that the Macedonian chairmanship will assist us in carrying out this project.

We trust that the plans and measures mentioned by you will make it possible to strengthen the role of the Council of Europe and help in the rapprochement of European countries and peoples.

Thank you for your attention.