

PC.DEL/458/09

18 June 2009

ENGLISH

Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

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

11 June 2009

In response to the report by the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine

Madam Chairperson,

We join in welcoming Mr. Lubomir Kopaj, the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, and wish to thank him for his informative report.

We note in particular that the report draws a clear distinction between budgetary and extrabudgetary activities, makes evident the objectives of the assistance, and in most cases provides information on which to assess the implementation status of the projects and the possible timetables for their completion. We should like to emphasize that transparency is an essential and paramount condition for the successful performance by the Co-ordinator of his functions in dealing with the tasks at hand.

We endorse Mr. Kopaj's desire to structure his work in line with the approved mandate and with the 1999 Memorandum of Understanding and in close co-operation with the Ukrainian authorities.

We think it important that within the framework of these measures the Co-ordinator should continue to observe a balance in all three key dimensions. Right now, it would seem, the accent is still being placed on matters having to do with the third "basket", while clearly not enough attention is being paid to the other areas of concern.

Another remark concerns the Co-ordinator's co-operation with representatives of civil society, individual non-governmental organizations and media representatives. It goes without saying that interaction of this kind remains part of his mandate. At the same time, we should like to recall that it is precisely the State structures of the host country that are the primary partner and recipient of the assistance provided and that only their requests and wishes can serve as the basis for initiating a particular programme.

In co-operation with other institutions, the Co-ordinator must continue to focus his efforts on countering xenophobia and promoting the rights of ethnic minorities. We regard this aspect as particularly important in the light of the growing trend towards banishing the Russian language from many areas of everyday life in Ukraine – this in spite of the fact that

Russian is not only the native tongue for eight million Russians but also the primary means of communication for many other ethnic groups representing one half of the citizens of that country. We are counting on the Co-ordinator, working together with the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, to actively help to bring about a just solution to the problems of the Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine.

In the context of the forthcoming presidential elections, stepped-up attention should be paid to projects concerned with improving the country's electoral system. The essential thing is that these projects are of a technical nature involving experts and that they be totally transparent for all OSCE participating States.

Allow me to take this opportunity to wish Mr. Kopaj and the staff of his office every success in carrying out the tasks before them.

Thank you for your attention.