

ENGLISH only

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
INTERVENTION IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS
BY AMBASSADOR IVAR VIKKI, HEAD OF THE OSCE CENTRE IN ASTANA
700TH MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
7 FEBRUARY 2008**

Canada joins others in warmly welcoming the Head of the OSCE Centre in Astana, Ambassador Ivar Vikki, back to the Permanent Council.

Canada highly values the work done in Kazakhstan by the Centre in all three dimensions. We are pleased that this work is not only undertaken in Astana, but also through the regional office in Almaty.

Kazakhstan is a large country that plays a pivotal role in regional security of Central Asia. For this reason, OSCE activity should take place in all areas of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Chairman, Canada congratulates Kazakhstan in its successful efforts to become the Chairman-in-Office. We reiterate our call for concrete action from the leaders of our Organisation in meeting their OSCE commitments and providing support for ODIHR.

To this end, Canada looks forward to the Government of Kazakhstan's continued cooperation with the OSCE Centre in Astana in preparation for its Chairmanship.

In particular, we would encourage OSCE programming in the area of media reform as well as continued strengthening of interethnic and inter-religious tolerance.

We also look to Kazakhstan to continue the modernization of its political process, especially in the area of elections.

Canada is pleased that Foreign Minister Tazhin committed Kazakhstan to undertake these democratic reforms in his address to the Ministerial Council in Madrid. In conclusion, we thank Ambassador Vikki and his team in their efforts to assist Kazakhstan in realising these worthy goals.

As this is his final appearance before the Permanent Council as Head of the OSCE Mission, we thank him for his very successful work in Kazakhstan. We wish Ambassador Vikki all the best in his future endeavours.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.