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**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR FRANÇOIS ALABRUNE,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE TO THE OSCE, AT
THE 942nd MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

28 February 2013

Homage to Mr. Stéphane Hessel

Mr. Chairperson,

I should like to take the opportunity at this Permanent Council meeting to pay homage to Mr. Stéphane Hessel, who died yesterday. His personality and his career as a citizen of the world and a diplomat are a source of inspiration for the art of dialogue and respect of the values that are at the core of our work in the OSCE.

Mr. Hessel's life stands as a strong symbol of Franco-German relations and an example of commitment to peace and human dignity.

Born with German nationality in Berlin in 1917 during the First World War, he settled in France in his youth and acquired French nationality while studying. He was mobilized in the French army during the Second World War, was captured and escaped. He was active thereafter in the Resistance, captured again and deported to a concentration camp. After his return to France he became a diplomat. In 1948, as secretary of the Commission on Human Rights, he helped draft the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He was chosen in 2008 as the major witness of the celebrations marking the 60th anniversary of this document. This convinced European, who pursued this commitment throughout his life and fought against injustices, was a thoughtful man who was always ready to listen and discuss.

In conclusion, I should like to read out the communiqué by the President of the Republic on this subject, which was distributed yesterday:

"I am very saddened to learn that Stéphane Hessel has passed away. He was a great figure whose exceptional life was dedicated to defending human dignity.

It was for the sake of his values that he joined the Resistance.

Convinced of the need for global governance, he worked on the establishment of the UN and pursued a brilliant career as a diplomat in the service of peace.

As a European scarred by the war, he played an active role in the unification of our continent.

As a passionate humanist, he engaged in every struggle for human rights and against prejudice, conformism and conservatism.

His capacity for outrage knew no limits save that of his own life. Now that his life is over, he has bequeathed us a lesson: not to resign ourselves to any injustice.

I offer our gratitude to his family and close friends.”