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

24 June 2010

**In response to the report by the Head of the
Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje**

Mr. Chairperson,

We join in welcoming Ambassador Jose-Luis Herrero and thank him for his detailed report on the state of affairs in Macedonia and the principal activities of the Mission.

We are in favour of giving priority attention to the task of harmonizing inter-ethnic relations and strengthening mutual understanding between all the national communities as a basis for preserving stability and security. Assistance in maintaining a constructive dialogue between the Macedonian parties on a range of issues concerning the country's reform is an integral part of this process.

We regard as an important element in this context further active assistance in the strict observance of the provisions of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, which confirms the territorial integrity and unitary character of Macedonia. This task is enshrined in the Mission's mandate, since the OSCE presence is one of the guarantors of the agreements reached.

We commend the Mission's efforts in the education sphere. We believe that the reform in this area aimed at the integration of all the ethnic groups into public and political life is of fundamental importance in maintaining a balance in inter-ethnic relations and preserving the unity of the State.

We might also mention the Mission's efforts to provide assistance to the Macedonian structures in ensuring the rule of law and improving the law enforcement system and electoral laws. It is important to continue the work to combat organized crime, corruption, trafficking in human beings and illicit trafficking in arms and narcotic drugs. All of these aspects are transborder in nature and need to be resolved through regional co-operation, *inter alia* through collaboration among the OSCE missions in the Western Balkans.

The fact that problems still exist with respect to maintaining law and order was made clear by the recent events on the Macedonian border, when national security forces were

involved in a skirmish with members of the Kosovo Liberation Army. Unfortunately, this is just one example graphically bearing out our warnings as regards the destabilizing effect on the entire Balkan region of the recognition of and support for the establishment of an “independent” Kosovo.

We support the Mission’s intention to continue close contacts with the Macedonian authorities and to organize its projects activities on the basis of the requests of the host country and with account taken of its views. We see no serious obstacles to the proposal by Mr. Antonio Milošoski, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Macedonia, to rename the presence the “OSCE Mission in Skopje”.

In conclusion, we should like to wish Ambassador Herrero and his staff continued success in their work.

Thank you for your attention.