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**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF SWITZERLAND
ALSO ON BEHALF OF LIECHTENSTEIN AND NORWAY AT THE
919th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

5 July 2012

Madam Chairperson,

I am speaking here on behalf of Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

The act of torture breaks the victim's personality and is an affront to human dignity, and yet torture remains a widespread phenomenon and its complete and absolute prohibition is threatened.

The durability of the phenomenon is partly due to shortcomings in the judicial systems, which do not punish or do not sufficiently punish recourse to this practice. This impunity which continues to exist in numerous contexts therefore fails to prevent torturers from resuming this practice. Moreover, pre-trial detention is a particularly sensitive period and the risks of torture are even greater then.

Currently, all the OSCE participating States have signed the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Nevertheless, a quarter of them have not signed or ratified its Optional Protocol, an innovative instrument in terms of prevention.

As Professor Juan Mendez, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, recently noted in his statement to the Human Dimension Committee, better implementation of existing standards in the international conventions would already bring progress in combating this scourge. The creation of national preventive mechanisms as required by the Optional Protocol also constitutes an appropriate and necessary measure, as stated in the Athens Ministerial Declaration.

The elimination of torture is a foreign policy priority for us. In this regard, we pay tribute to the work carried out by the OSCE institutions in this area, whether in Warsaw or within the field missions.

On the occasion of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, our countries call on all the OSCE participating States to implement their commitments under the Convention against Torture, to step up the process to ratify its additional protocol and to set up their national preventive mechanisms as quickly as possible.

Thank you.