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Delegation of Switzerland

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF SWITZERLAND AT THE
MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

20 November 2008

**In response to the report by Ambassador Orhun,
Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office on
Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims**

Mr. Chairman,

It is my pleasure to welcome the three Personal Representatives of the Chairman-in-Office for tolerance and non-discrimination and to thank them for their reports.

I should like to comment briefly on the activities of the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, Ambassador Orhun.

The delegations have just received the report on his visit to Switzerland. This visit took place in November of last year.

The Swiss federal authorities take note of the report by Ambassador Orhun and the recommendations he has made.

Let me tell you that we regard the visit by the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office, Ambassador Orhun, its media coverage and its follow-up as a clear sign of an open and frank dialogue between the Swiss authorities concerned and the representatives of the Muslim communities in Switzerland.

The Swiss Federal Government supports integration and the treatment of religious communities in accordance with Switzerland's laws. It is tirelessly combating all acts of intolerance against religious communities, including the Muslim community. In this context, it reaffirms its position of urging rejection of the initiative on the prohibition of minarets, a subject taken up in Mr. Orhun's report. You will of course recall that I made my views on the aforementioned initiative known here on 10 July of this year.

In conclusion, I should like to thank the three Personal Representatives of the Chairman-in-Office for the work they have done and wish them every success in their important activities to protect religious minorities.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.