

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

FINAL- as delivered

**Statement delivered by Ambassador Fredericka Gregory
“Canada’s priorities for the 2011 OSCE Ministerial Council in Vilnius”
The 889th (Re-enforced) Meeting of the Permanent Council
(Vienna, 18 November 2011, OSCE - Hofburg)**

Mr. Chairperson:

My Delegation welcomes this opportunity to take stock of our preparations for the OSCE Ministerial Council in Vilnius (6-7 December), and to consolidate our positions on Ministerial priorities and deliverables.

From the outset, Canada has been supportive of the Lithuanian OSCE Chairmanship’s plans and priorities for the year, including the Ministerial and active engagement of civil society in our work. To a large extent, the Chair’s goals and priorities mirror our own.

We very much appreciate the pragmatic and realistic approach taken by the Lithuanian Chairmanship that has helped the OSCE-56 make steady progress on some of the key issues and mandates stemming from the 2010 Astana Summit. This is reflected in the solid and comprehensive package of draft decisions and political declarations that we have developed for Vilnius, and which span all 3 OSCE Dimensions (i.e. nearly 30 initiatives in total).

We hope that Vilnius can help us move from words to deeds and joint actions, by adopting a few tangible and meaningful deliverables that will help build trust and security cooperation within our vast Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian region.

Canada’s Minister for Foreign Affairs John Baird will lead our delegation in Vilnius. Canada very much supports the proposal of Foreign Minister Azubalis to focus the Ministerial – and especially the Ministers’ working lunch on December 6th - on the evolving needs of our OSCE Partners for Cooperation.

In particular, we believe that the capacity-building needs of our “Arab Awakening” partners, as well as those of Afghanistan merit the special attention of Ministers in Vilnius. We will need guidance from Ministers on next steps and on the OSCE’s role in

responding to requests for enhanced cooperation that we receive from our Mediterranean and Asian Partners.

The Ministers' lunch will also be a chance to consider the Austrian Foreign Ministers' timely proposal on Libya, a country which may one day wish to become an OSCE Partner in order to draw on the Organization's democracy-building and conflict prevention tools and experience.

In our view, the historic "Arab Awakening" has reaffirmed the continued relevance of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security that is centered on the values of human rights, democracy, and good governance, not only on military might and control.

Mr. Chairperson, in addition to the priority we accord to our OSCE Partners, Canada will come to the Vilnius Ministerial with the aim of achieving progress on the four following priorities we have for the OSCE's future work:

- (i) Preserving and enhancing the OSCE's vital Human Dimension work. We will aim for solid outcomes on Tolerance, including Freedom of Religion. We also hope that Vilnius can adopt the first-ever OSCE Declaration on Freedom of the Digital Media (an initiative Canada has co-sponsored) and a decision on the Safety of Journalists.
- (ii) Strengthening the OSCE's role in combatting Transnational Threats (TNTs), and on helping Afghanistan. We hope Vilnius can reach consensus on a consolidated TNTs mandate for the Organization. This will enhance our work on key challenges such as illicit trafficking and cyber security. And, we will push for the adoption of a solid Action Plan for Afghanistan; one with capacity-building projects that span all 3 OSCE Dimensions, as mandated by the 2010 Astana Summit Declaration.
- (iii) Making the OSCE a more effective tool for conflict prevention and crisis management. For Vilnius, the time has come to reach consensus on an updated and strengthened OSCE "tool kit" in conflict prevention – and notably in the key areas of: early-warning, mediation, and post-conflict rehabilitation. Such an outcome would pay tribute to our hard work on this since 2009, during the OSCE's "Corfu Process" and in the "V-to-V" Dialogue that the Lithuanian Chair has spearheaded to bring this to fruition.
- (iv) Modernizing the region's Conventional Arms Control regimes and Confidence and Security-Building Measures (CSBMs). Vilnius can contribute to this goal by endorsing the work of the Forum for Security Cooperation in updating substantively the Vienna Document 2011. Vilnius should also signal the way forward for this CSBMs tool and related regional Arms Control regimes, because they are key for ensuring military predictability, transparency and trust.

A few final points: Canada's firm commitment to the OSCE's comprehensive security concept means that we will also seek progress in Vilnius for the work of the Economic and Environmental Dimension, notably through promoting **equal opportunities for women**. On **energy security**, Vilnius will be an opportunity for us to determine the OSCE's niche and role in this field of growing importance, while avoiding the duplication of efforts.

Last, but not least, Ministers should come to Vilnius ready to pronounce on **Mongolia's bid** to become a full OSCE participating State. In fact, this issue concerning one of our Partner's should also be discussed and agreed to during the Ministers' lunch on December 6th. Canada believes the time is ripe for a positive decision on this due to the strong merits of the Mongolian case. Moreover, Mongolia's bid addresses a fundamental principle for us all: the right of a country to choose its own security arrangements and associations.

We remain hopeful that consensus can be found by the OSCE-56 in Vilnius on delivering a solid and balanced package of agreements to guide the OSCE's future work and build trust and cooperation within our Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian community, from Vancouver to Vladivostok. You can count on Canada's full support towards reaching this goal.

Thank you/Merci!