

Delegation of Switzerland

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF SWITZERLAND
AT THE 947th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

11 April 2013

**In response to the statement by Ambassador Patricia Flor,
European Union Special Representative for Central Asia**

Mr. Chairperson,

We warmly welcome Ambassador Flor to the Permanent Council and thank her for her interesting remarks. We are greatly gratified by the fact that for the second time within only a few weeks she has honoured us with her presence here in the Hofburg.

The OSCE is the only regional organization with so broad a membership, stretching from North America all the way to Central Asia and Mongolia. The Organization is represented in Central Asia by its field offices and its training institutions such as the OSCE Academy in Bishkek and the Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe. This makes the OSCE an ideal partner for the European Union. Switzerland would like to see the European Union as a whole and the individual EU member States become engaged in Central Asia wherever possible in existing forums and formats, taking particular account in this connection of OSCE missions and projects as well.

At the last OSCE summit meeting in December 2010 in Astana the Heads of State or Government of the OSCE participating States spoke of their vision of a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community. In this connection, the OSCE, like the European Union, has undertaken a comprehensive commitment in the three dimensions of politico-military security, economy and the environment, and human rights and democracy. As a recognized partner on the ground, it can provide a useful platform for dialogue. For this reason, institutional and practical co-operation between the OSCE and the EU should be promoted in order to draw on the strengths of the individual institutions and enhance their effectiveness in the region through complementarity. A good example of practical co-operation can be seen in the way the three special envoys of the European Union, the United Nations and the OSCE for Kyrgyzstan, who co-operated in particular during the 2010 crisis and thereafter, work together. We also welcome the EU's financial support for the Community Security Initiative in southern Kyrgyzstan.

Switzerland is also working closely together on a bilateral basis with the Central Asian countries. The country programmes focus on the areas of health, water supply, reform of the public sector, good governance and development of the private sector. At this point, all

Central Asian countries with one exception have joined the Swiss voting group in the Bretton Woods institutions, namely the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Looking towards our OSCE chairmanship next year, we are in the process of discussing the various political and security policy challenges with our Central Asian partners. State Secretary Rossier will travel to the region in the near future.

In the light of the planned withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force from Afghanistan next year, regional co-operation at the local level takes on even greater importance. Here too we see important areas for co-operation.

We noted with satisfaction, Madam Ambassador, that you are willing to consider in detail specific possibilities for co-operation between the OSCE and the European Union.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.