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

15 January 2009

**On the programmatic statement by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office,
Mrs. Dora Bakoyannis, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece**

Madam Chairperson,

We warmly welcome Mrs. Dora Bakoyannis, the distinguished Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, to today's meeting of the Permanent Council.

We are particularly pleased that the position of OSCE Chairperson-in-Office has passed this year to a country with a truly ancient civilization and one that has handed down to us the very concepts of democracy, pluralism and human rights.

We thank Mrs. Bakoyannis for her interesting and informative statement. We largely share her assessments of the state of affairs in the OSCE as well as the Chairmanship's proposed approaches to dealing with the critical tasks confronting our Organization.

In fact, one cannot but note that there is an ever more keenly felt lack of mutual trust in the OSCE area. The Organization's basic purpose and the key postulate of the Charter for European Security — ensuring equal and indivisible security for all participating States — remain unfulfilled. The result is an escalating trend towards the fragmentation of a common security space.

We are opposed to the marginalization of the OSCE. Russia is prepared to engage in constructive co-operation with the Greek Chairmanship and with all other participating States to rectify the situation that has arisen. We propose including on the agenda a great many unifying and forward-looking topics of key importance to participating States. It is in this spirit that Russia has proposed the *involvement of the OSCE in the implementation of President Medvedev's initiative calling for the conclusion of a comprehensive, legally binding Treaty on European Security*, which would make possible the creation of a single collective security space for all Euro-Atlantic States. It is our hope that the Chairmanship's working philosophy set out here today will genuinely help us to overcome the crisis situations that have beset our Organization in recent years, to adapt it to the new realities in the world and to provide it with an effective strategy by co-ordinating the efforts of the participating States in the three security dimensions.

We welcome the intention of the Chairperson-in-Office to organize a special high-level meeting to continue the discussion of security problems in the Euro-Atlantic area. Also still on the agenda is the question of convening a pan-European summit meeting on this subject with the participation of the heads of the OSCE participating States and of the directors of other international organizations working in the security area.

We share the view that the failure to resolve the issues surrounding the *reform of the OSCE* is having an ever-greater impact on the effectiveness of the Organization. Progress in this area would make it possible to strengthen the rule of law in the work of the Organization and its inter-State character and to ensure genuine equality on the part of all participating States. This also applies to the tasks involved in strengthening the OSCE's executive bodies, rectifying the functional and geographical imbalances in the work of the Organization, improving the work of the Secretariat, the institutions and field missions, including the procedure for the appointment of the heads of those offices, systematizing the participation of non-governmental organizations in OSCE events, and, finally, improving programme and budgetary planning.

We are counting on Greece to be successful in finding a consensus on the difficult but fundamentally important question of conferring on the OSCE an international legal status of its own, including the reaching of an agreement on a Charter. On this issue we shall maintain close contact with the Chairperson's special representative appointed in line with the decision of the Helsinki Ministerial Council meeting. We would propose in that connection that thought be given to the holding in 2009 of a "round table" on the question of the OSCE's legal personality, which might involve experts from capitals and, possibly, representatives of the legal offices of key organizations, particularly those within the United Nations system.

The question of how best to improve the quality and transparency of the work of the *Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)*, mainly with respect to election monitoring, continues to be relevant. We are counting on the new leadership of that Office to implement conscientiously the relevant decision of the Brussels Ministerial Council meeting, including the recommendations on improving election monitoring. There are already on the negotiating table specific ideas put forward in 2007 by a group of countries, including Russia, which are aimed at collectively devising the basic principles to underlie national election monitoring by the ODIHR. Such monitoring must be carried out on a basis of parity in all participating States and must be based on an objective approach excluding the possibility of biased and politically motivated assessments.

We take the view that the discussions on the subject of improved monitoring by the Office must be continued and expanded with the active involvement of distinguished representatives from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. We look forward to the holding under the aegis of the Greek Chairmanship and the ODIHR of an expert meeting with the participation of the directors of the central election commissions in the participating States.

We agree that the OSCE must continue to engage actively in *conflict resolution*. It is also obvious that, as was rightly pointed out by the Foreign Minister, exclusively political means must be sought for successfully dealing with these conflicts, as this would genuinely help to enhance security in the Euro-Atlantic area. Here too, however, there must be uniform standards. We propose that a list of these standards be included in the Treaty on European

Security. Of critical importance obviously is the agreement of the parties to the conflict, something that we must in every way seek to promote.

As regards the outlook for the activities of the *OSCE Mission to Georgia* and the presence of observers from the Organization in other regions of the South Caucasus, our fundamental position on this subject remains unchanged. The Russian Government is prepared to continue negotiations to work out the terms of new independent mandates for OSCE offices in Tbilisi and Tskhinvali, taking account however of the radically new alignment of forces in the region following the events of last August, with which we are all familiar.

As far as the work of the *OSCE Mission in Kosovo* is concerned, we take the position that that Mission must be given a status-neutral character and must not abet the legitimization of the unilaterally proclaimed independence of that territory. The work of the field presence in Kosovo should be organized in complete harmony with the provisions of resolution 1244 of the Security Council of the United Nations, which remains the legal basis underpinning the stationing of international offices in the territory.

In the area of *non-military threats to security* priority must continue to be given to combating terrorism, the threat of drugs and organized crime. We are counting on the active support of the Greek Chairmanship in pursuing these goals.

We regard the decision of the Helsinki Ministerial Council meeting on further steps by the OSCE to *counter terrorism* as the basis for our work in 2009. That document, in particular, makes it possible to further pursue joint efforts in matters of public-private partnerships in countering terrorism and in combating extremism and radicalization, in addition to providing for a review of anti-terrorist commitments. Russia intends to participate actively in the forthcoming events.

We are interested in stepping up the OSCE's *work with respect to narcotic drugs* and in strengthening the Secretariat's potential in this area. For the time being, the Organization's potential resources in this field are not being used to anywhere near the degree they might be. We are in favour of convening this year the latest in the series of conferences dealing with the narcotics issue, which might provide an opportunity for considering further steps to be taken in combating the problem of narcotic drugs.

Russia is also prepared to continue to contribute in specific ways to the promotion of co-operation between the OSCE and Afghanistan on the basis of the relevant decision of the Madrid Ministerial Council meeting. In particular, we view favourably the continued implementation of the Organization's project to train Afghan narcotics police officers at the All-Russian Institute for Advanced Training of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs at Domodedovo.

We consider it important to give new life to the OSCE's systemic efforts as regards the *military aspects of security*. In order that the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation may make the contribution it was designed to make, it is necessary that there should be an unbiased review of the existing norms and documents to determine whether they are in line with present-day realities. There is a great need also for the formulation of new confidence-building measures in the politico-military sphere, and Russian proposals along these lines have been presented to the Forum.

We welcome the readiness of the Chairmanship to assist in the search for ways out of the *crisis surrounding the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty)*. Russia takes the position that the rescuing of the CFE Treaty regime is altogether possible through collective steps to rehabilitate the Agreement on Adaptation of the Treaty and other measures to increase its viability.

We share the intention of the Greek Chairmanship to pay greater attention to the *economic and environmental dimension*, including a discussion of issues having to do with the global financial crisis. We supported the selection of migration as the theme for the 17th Economic and Environmental Forum.

At the same time, we think it important when preparing the agenda for the OSCE's "second basket" to take into account existing realities and not to impose on the Organization tasks that are beyond its reach and also not to place the OSCE in competition with specialized international agencies. It is important to take as a point of departure the urgent socio-economic needs of participating States and the Organization's ability to bring genuine "added value" and also to take into account its potential in terms of expertise and money.

We support Greece's intention to move away from confrontational rhetoric within the Organization's *human dimension*. We have taken note of the fact that Athens' priorities in the human rights "basket" will be issues having to do with the rule of law and gender equality. We are prepared to support the Chairmanship in these efforts.

We think it important to focus attention on the development of co-operation and on the exchange of useful experience between participating States on still other subjects that are no less topical for all countries. These include the promotion of tolerance and intercultural dialogue, the combating of manifestations of neo-fascism and neo-Nazism, and the protection of the rights of national minorities, including the rights of the Russian-speaking population in a number of the Organization's participating States.

In conclusion, we should like to sincerely wish the Chairmanship's closely knit team and you personally, Madam Foreign Minister, the successes and achievements we all so need in your difficult but honourable task of guiding the affairs of our Organization. Russia intends to work with its Greek partners in an energetic and constructive manner.

Thank you for your attention.