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STATEMENT BY SWITZERLAND AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

10 December 2009

On the annual report by Ms. Eva Biaudet, OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

Madam Chairperson,

Switzerland once again welcomes Ms. Eva Biaudet, OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, to this meeting of the Permanent Council. We thank her for her substantive annual report for 2009, which not only provides an account of the various activities carried out by her office in the course of the year but also outlines the challenges to be faced in the near future. Her successor, whoever he or she may be, will be able to benefit from and build on this achievement.

Combating the causes, prevention, prosecution and protecting the victims form a complex and dynamic whole calling repeatedly for expert discussions and structural adaptation at the international, regional and national levels. The OSCE has been dealing successfully with “anti-trafficking” in all its complexity since 2000, creating an authoritative internationally recognized profile and developing a wide range of instruments for participating States. Mention might be made in this regard of the bilateral dialogue with and technical support for participating States, country reviews, expert seminars, conferences of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons (ATP) and publications on the subject. We welcome the fact that during Ms. Biaudet’s period of office these instruments have been expanded, further developed and adapted to the needs of the OSCE States.

For Switzerland, which currently chairs the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, co-operation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe is of great importance. Both organizations have identified trafficking in human beings as a priority area in which co-operation needs to be strengthened, notwithstanding the established and diverse contacts that already exist between Strasbourg and Vienna. There are bilateral meetings already not only between Ms. Biaudet’s office and the corresponding Council of Europe Focal Point but also within the framework of the Co-ordination Group and the ATP. Switzerland welcomes the continuation of this close co-operation, particularly in view of the very different monitoring mechanisms existing in the various States.

In conclusion, we should like to thank Ms. Biaudet especially for accepting our invitations on several occasions to visit Switzerland, most recently in November 2008 for a

conference in Bern. The relationship between her office and our authorities, experts and non-governmental organizations has always been well-intentioned, constructive and enriching. We have greatly appreciated Ms. Biaudet's open and at the same time competent willingness to talk.

Ms. Biaudet,

Your departure from Vienna after a good three years in office will not be easy for any of us, and this is all the more reason for wishing you all the best for your professional and personal future.

Madam Chairperson, I thank you for your attention.