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

31 March 2011

**In response to the statement by Mr. Hamrokhon Zarifi,  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are pleased to welcome Mr. Hamrokhon Zarifi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, to today's meeting of the Permanent Council. We are grateful to him for having outlined Tajikistan's priorities within the OSCE as well as his vision of the role of our Organization in resolving a number of problems in Central Asia.

We are pleased to note that most of the approaches mentioned today by the distinguished Minister coincide with our own agenda. It is fair to say that the smooth co-operation between Moscow and Dushanbe on a bilateral basis and in various multilateral formats is also well established within the OSCE.

In particular, we fully share Mr. Zarifi's view that unless we resolve the painful problem of the OSCE's legal status it will be impossible for our Organization to function properly as a subject of international law and for it to co-operate on an equal basis with key international organizations in forming a common security space. For many years now, Russia, Tajikistan and other participating States have been systematically promoting the idea of adopting an OSCE charter. A draft of this constituent document was circulated by the countries of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) in 2007. Like our Tajik partners, we are counting on the Lithuanian Chairmanship to spare no effort in considering this question of fundamental importance for the future of the OSCE.

The questions touched on by Mr. Zarifi as regards ensuring freedom of speech are also relevant to all the OSCE participating States. In our view, it is essential not only to protect freedom of the media but also to promote their self-regulation, since freedom of expression places obligations and a responsibility on journalists with regard to their audience.

We fully agree that security in Central Asia is inextricably linked with the situation in Afghanistan. In this sense, Tajikistan is certainly on the firing line and is the first to encounter the threat of terrorism and drug trafficking emanating from the south.

Russia values Tajikistan's efforts to combat the proliferation of these global challenges and is ready to co-ordinate with its partners and provide them with assistance as an ally within the framework of existing agreements. In particular, the presence in Tajikistan of our 201st military base is an important stabilizing factor. Furthermore, we are working towards the signing as soon as possible of a new agreement between Russia and Tajikistan on border co-operation. We are confident that this document will help to consolidate our strategic collaboration, particularly as regards the strengthening of Tajikistan's southern borders.

Within the OSCE we are also doing as much as we can to ensure the security of Tajikistan's borders. For example, members of the Border Service of the Russian Federal Security Service teaching at the OSCE Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe are sharing their experience with the students, the majority of whom are from Tajikistan.

We stress the importance of the four-party framework consisting of Russia, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan mentioned by the distinguished Minister, which is making it possible for us to resolve extremely difficult tasks and counter new threats and challenges together. I might mention that work is also being carried out in this area within the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the CSTO, under whose auspices the Kanal operation has been run on a regular basis with the aim of suppressing illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs. Russia and Tajikistan participate in this operation as full members, while Pakistan and Afghanistan are observers.

Also of importance is the complete revival of Afghanistan's economy, without which it will be impossible to solve the majority of the problems facing that country and, accordingly, Central Asia. However, the intensification of economic co-operation in the region also remains an independent issue. Russia and Tajikistan are in favour of implementing regional projects concerned with energy and transport infrastructure and of establishing trade links, an important prerequisite for which is the free movement of people, goods and services.

Russia supports the development of Tajikistan's hydropower network, without which it will be impossible to increase the country's economic potential. With our key involvement, the Sangutdin No. 1 hydroelectric power station began operations in July 2010. President Medvedev referred to that event as the most important in recent years in the history of our bilateral relations.

At the same time, the question of the OSCE's involvement in resolving disagreements about water and energy in Central Asia requires careful consideration. We take the position that these problems should be resolved primarily by the countries of the region themselves.

Once again, we should like to thank the distinguished Minister for his informative and interesting statement and to wish him and the fraternal people of Tajikistan every success in the sustainable and ongoing development of their country.

Thank you for your attention.