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Delegation of Switzerland

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF SWITZERLAND AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

17 March 2011

Regarding la Francophonie

Mr. Chairperson,

On 20 March 2011, as they do each year, francophones around the world will celebrate the International Day of la Francophonie. This date commemorates the founding, on 20 March 1970, of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation, which has since become the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF). Switzerland is currently chairing the summit of la Francophonie and will do so until 2012, the date of the next summit, scheduled to be held in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Among OSCE participating States, 15 are members of the OIF and 15 others are observers. Several OSCE partner States are also members. We all share the universal values of la Francophonie, which are the same as those of the OSCE: protecting human rights, promoting a democratic culture, promoting pluralism in the media, promoting peace and preventing crises and conflicts.

In October 2010, at the Montreux Summit in Switzerland, the francophone countries declared their determination to jointly counter transnational threats, such as organized crime, drug trafficking and trafficking in human beings, on the basis of common and shared responsibility. On that occasion, the Heads of State or Government of countries having the French language in common also reaffirmed their support for the Republic of Moldova, an OIF member country, in its efforts to settle the Transnistrian conflict by political means within the framework of the 5+2 negotiations. They also reaffirmed their attachment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and called upon the participants in the Geneva talks to take all measures necessary for the implementation of the ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008. The Heads of State also affirmed their support for the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen to bring about a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Mr. Chairperson,

The countries having the French language in common therefore strongly expressed their support for the work of the OSCE, and we should like to recall that here on the occasion of the International Day of la Francophonie.

This year, the Day of la Francophonie is dedicated to young people, who represent the future of each country. Let us work together to offer our young people a future that is safe, stable and filled with opportunity.

Thank you for your attention.