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Dear Colleagues,

As indicated in the Chairmanship's Discussion Paper for the Informal Ambassadorial Meeting on 15 March 2011, 'Advancing the V to V Dialogue on the Conflict Cycle' (CIO.GAL/31/11), I am pleased to invite you to the 1st Expert Meeting within the Framework of the Conflict Cycle: 'Enhancing the Early Warning Capacities of the OSCE'.

The 1st Expert Meeting will take place on 15 April, 10 a.m., in the Bibliothekssaal, Hofburg, and is expected to include two working sessions, with brief remarks provided by a panel of experts from within the OSCE and from outside institutions.

The aim of this 1st Expert Meeting is to identify existing gaps and discuss how to create a more systematic and comprehensive early warning capacity that befits the structures of, and the political complexities of the OSCE, including its comprehensive concept of security.

A Concept Note is attached to provide an initial description and overview of the purpose, objectives, and modalities of the 1st Expert Meeting. A Food-for Thought discussion paper will also be distributed to all delegations prior to the Expert Meeting.

I look forward to joining us for this event.

Sincerely Yours,

Renatas Norkus
Ambassador, Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council

To:
Delegations of the OSCE Participating States
OSCE Partners for Co-operation
OSCE Secretariat
OSCE Institutions
OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

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Concept Note for the 1st Expert Meeting within the Framework of the Conflict Cycle - V to V Dialogue:

‘Enhancing the Early Warning and Analytical Capacity of the OSCE’

Introduction:

The importance of early warning to the OSCE is clearly set out in its basic documents. Discussions during the Corfu Process and the 2010 Review Conference repeatedly addressed, *inter alia*, the strengthening of the OSCE’s role and capabilities in early warning. At the first Informal Meeting at Ambassadors’ level of the ‘V to V Dialogue’ on 15 March 2011, delegations reiterated the need for a more comprehensive and organization-wide early warning and analytical capacity, while also expressing that more early warning be provided in advance of emerging crisis situations (See, Chair’s Perception Paper, distributed under CIO.GAL/45/11). The underlying premise of this expert meeting should be that, while the OSCE practices early warning through a number of instruments (e.g., field operations, the HCNM), efforts should be directed toward identifying existing gaps and creating a more systematic and comprehensive early warning capacity that befits the structures and political complexities of the OSCE, including its comprehensive approach to security.

Purpose:

This Expert Meeting is intended to serve as the first in a series of informal meetings on the conflict cycle, and it will focus on the first phase of the cycle – early warning. Two more expert meetings and one workshop will follow. These will explore in more depth issues related to other phases of the conflict cycle. In this regard, the 1st Expert Meeting will provide the basic foundation for exploring in more detail how to strengthen the early warning capacity of the OSCE, taking into account the three dimensions of security, and what participating States will need to do to advance concrete initiatives already described in their Corfu proposals.

Objectives:

The 1st Expert Meeting will serve three objectives: (1) to take stock of the existing early warning capacity in the OSCE, exploring strengths and weaknesses and what has worked and not worked so well; (2) to identify how the current capacity can be strengthened; and (3) to draw up concrete recommendations that can lead toward the implementation of a more systematic and comprehensive early warning capacity.

Modalities:

The 1st Expert Meeting will be held on 15 April 2011, and will include two working sessions. The themes of the morning’s three-hour working session will be introduced by a panel of experts drawn from OSCE delegations and executive structures as well as external organizations and

institutions. Further discussions on already existing proposals put forward by participating States, as well as the formulation of concrete recommendations and preliminary conclusions will be the focus of the afternoon's two-hour session.

A co-ordinator, drawn from one of the delegations, will serve as moderator for the 1st Expert Meeting. The Chairmanship believes that an interactive exchange on the various themes under discussion will be crucial for each session. Accordingly, delegations are encouraged to draw on their already substantial expertise, including from capitals, in the area of early warning and to expand on their Corfu Process proposals. A Food-for-Thought paper, provided by the Secretariat and distributed prior to the meeting, will inform the discussions and serve as a basis for considering further concrete action.

Outcome/Products:

A report from the 1st Expert Meeting will be distributed to all delegations, with recommendations and follow-on activities clearly identified. Further informal meetings, such as in a working group format, may be deemed necessary to follow the 1st Expert Meeting, in order to continue in-depth discussions on elements for a possible PC/MC decision.