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Delegation of Switzerland

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

3 April 2008

In response to the report by Ambassador Douglas Davidson, Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mr. Chairman,

The Swiss delegation welcomes Ambassador Davidson and thanks him for his very complete and informative report, which gives us a good overview of the various challenges that still have to be overcome in Bosnia and Herzegovina. On the occasion of her official visit to Sarajevo last week, the Swiss Minister for Foreign Affairs called attention to Switzerland's expectations as regards the important reforms (specifically reforms of the police and the constitution) that need to be carried out to free the way for the country's integration into the Euro-Atlantic institutions and to enable the continuation of the political and economic development of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I can only repeat our hope that the necessary, if difficult, compromises will be found as quickly as possible.

The Swiss delegation also wishes to take this opportunity to emphasize what we believe to be a particularly important aspect of the OSCE's activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, namely the monitoring of the courts of justice (and specifically the Rule 11bis cases at the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina).

Switzerland believes it is essential to shed as much light as possible on the past so as to be able to build a peaceful and prosperous long-term future and is therefore actively involved in efforts concerned with transitional justice and coming to terms with the past throughout the Western Balkans. Support for justice systems whether international or national is therefore a priority to enable victims and their relatives to obtain justice and to permit these societies in their entirety to satisfy their need for truth and justice in order to overcome the traumatic experiences of the 1990s. We therefore regard the efforts being made in Bosnia and Herzegovina to that end to be of crucial importance and we are especially pleased to be able to support the OSCE's monitoring activities in that area along with its efforts to assist the Bosnian Government in the establishment of a comprehensive strategy for the justice sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Ambassador Davidson mentioned several other major challenges in his report. I do not want to list them all here but would merely like to briefly mention education — a vital important area for the future of the country but also an area in which divisions unfortunately

remain considerable — and good governance at the local level — also an area of priority action and an area in which Switzerland is pleased to have been able to participate, together with the United Kingdom and the Council of Europe, in the launch of the Beacon Scheme project. This project is now in its third year and its usefulness and enormous significance are unanimously recognized and appreciated in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Once again, as Ambassador Davidson pointed out in his report, there are still many difficult challenges to be overcome in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Switzerland has no doubts, however, that the combined efforts — the efforts of the international community but also and *especially* the efforts of the leaders and citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina — will enable them to be overcome.

Lastly, the Swiss delegation would like to thank Ambassador Davidson for his great personal commitment to the management of the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina and wish him all the very best in his future activities.

Thank you for your attention.