

Canadian Delegation to the
Organization for Security & Cooperation
in Europe



Délégation du Canada auprès de
l'Organisation pour la sécurité et la coopération
en Europe

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**DELEGATION OF CANADA TO THE OSCE
STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR FREDERICKA GREGORY
IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE HEAD OF THE OSCE CENTRE IN
ASTANA, AMBASSADOR ALEXANDRE KELTCHEWSKY
763 MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
4 JUNE 2009**

Madame Chairperson:

Canada joins others in warmly welcoming the Head of the OSCE Centre in Astana, Ambassador Alexandre Keltchewsky, back to the Permanent Council, and wishes to thank him for his useful and comprehensive report.

Canada values the work undertaken by the Centre in Astana and its field office in Almaty in all three security dimensions. OSCE activities should take place in all regions of Kazakhstan, and the OSCE Centre should also consider a strategy that addresses regional and cross-border approaches and challenges.

Canada is pleased that the authorities of Kazakhstan are engaging constructively and proactively on reforms with the OSCE Centre in Kazakhstan, with the ODIHR, as well with its OSCE partners, towards full implementation of its OSCE Commitments, including in the key areas of media freedoms and elections, as well as on the tolerance agenda, and on legal reforms.

For example, recent efforts aimed at strengthening inter-ethnic and inter-religious tolerance are showing concrete progress, like the decision by the Constitutional Council of Kazakhstan to over-turn the Draft Law on Religious Freedoms so as to ensure equal treatment of all religious groups within the country.

We support and encourage the Republic of Kazakhstan to continue its goals of modernization and to sustain the momentum of the reform process underway. To this end, Canada looks forward to the Kazakhstan's continued cooperation with the OSCE Centre in Astana, including the implementation of its Madrid Ministerial commitments in preparation for its Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2010.

Canada will continue to encourage OSCE programming in the key areas of media reform and in the strengthening of the civil society. In our view, particular emphasis should be placed on reviewing the Draft Internet Legislation in its current form.

As well, we recommend that the Centre give continued priority to assisting local authorities and law enforcement agencies in the implementation of adopted reforms.

In conclusion, allow me to thank Ambassador Keltchewsky and his fine team for their effectiveness, professionalism and excellent relations with the host government. Keep up the good work!

Thank you, Madame Chairperson