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**STATEMENT BY MR. PIERRE COCHARD,
DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR POLITICAL AND SECURITY
AFFAIRS OF FRANCE, AT THE OPENING SESSION OF THE
2012 ANNUAL SECURITY REVIEW CONFERENCE**

Vienna, 26 June 2012

Mr. Chairperson,
Mr. Secretary General,
Ambassadors,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a privilege for me to be able to speak on behalf of France at this 2012 Annual Security Review Conference. I should like to thank the panellists and previous speakers for their statements, which bear witness to our shared willingness to progress towards the definition of our security community. France naturally supports the statement made in this regard by the representative of the European Union.

This Review Conference is accompanied by a plethora of initiatives that provide food for thought on European security. I was very interested to take part yesterday in the Security Days organized by Secretary General Lamberto Zannier and would like to thank him for this initiative. Around ten days ago the third IDEAS seminar took place in Paris on the initiative of research centres in four countries (France, Germany, Poland and Russia). This cycle will result in a report published this autumn designed to help preparations for the Ministerial Council meeting in Dublin.

This concurrence of initiatives and reflection is of course welcome. It should help us to progress towards achievement of the goal set by the Heads of State or Government in Astana.

But we should not fool ourselves. It also shows, between the lines, the extent of the task that confronts us and the difficulties we are encountering, particularly in the OSCE's first dimension. In reality,

- The conventional armed forces regime in Europe has reached an impasse, and we are unable to reach agreement on its relaunch or on its adaptation to the new security demands, which is nevertheless more necessary than ever;
- The implementation of the Treaty on Open Skies, which has just been mentioned, has also been disrupted in spite of the recognized relevance of this instrument;

- The process of modernization of the Vienna Document, although based on repeated mandates at the highest level, has not yet resulted in progress in keeping with the stakes at issue.

In this context, France's position is clear: having been involved in its establishment, it recognizes the contribution of the CSCE and OSCE to security on our continent and to the freedoms of Europeans; having consistently spoken in favour of the OSCE's adaptation to developments on our continent, it is aware that the Organization is useful for overcoming the divisions in Europe and that it can help to unify it on the basis of shared values. France cannot therefore resign itself to the decline of our Organization.

The OSCE is a unique community with a strong tradition, heritage and identity based on dialogue and benefiting from valuable conflict-prevention instruments. This is particularly true of politico-military questions. We have constructed instruments for arms control and transparency that are unequalled in the world. It would be unreasonable not to rely on these achievements to devise the instruments we will need in the future to guarantee and strengthen peace between us and our common security. It would also be irresponsible not to make optimum use of our negotiation platforms, which have proved their worth in the past.

What can we do to overcome the present difficulties?

Above all, it should be noted that we have shared interests on a number of topics and that we are faced with the same threats, old and new. I would like to cite four examples.

1. The absence of military transparency is not of benefit to any of us. France firmly believes that the full and comprehensive implementation, the viability and adaptation to the military context of the twenty-first century of all the agreed norms and measures is a priority objective for the OSCE. It has made proposals for lowering the thresholds for notification of military activities specified in the Vienna Document. It welcomes the proposals made recently by Germany. The adoption by Russia of internal arrangements enabling it to implement the Vienna Document is a piece of good news and should – at least we hope so – have a positive impact on current discussions.
2. The continued existence of frozen conflicts in the OSCE area is a permanent threat to stability and peace. It weighs on the climate that prevails here and considerably slows down the progress we seek in the three dimensions. As everyone knows, as co-chair of the Minsk Group, France has a special responsibility in the efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. We reaffirm that it is only through a peaceful negotiated settlement that the entire region will be able to move beyond the status quo and make progress towards a secure and prosperous future. We call on the parties to demonstrate restraint and not to delay any further in taking the necessary steps to arrive at a durable and peaceful settlement of this conflict. As for the conflict in Transdniestria, France welcomes the progress made since the resumption of official negotiations in the 5+2 format. It calls on all participants in the 5+2 meetings to work in a constructive spirit, at the next meeting taking place in mid-July in Vienna as well, so that progress can be made this year on the fundamental issues.
3. Cybercrime is a considerable threat for States and infrastructures. The OSCE should make its contribution, like NATO and the United Nations, to dealing with this global problem. We cannot afford to delay any more in elaborating confidence-building measures in

this domain, and it is fortunate that a working group set up to consider this problem has started work.

4. The transfer of security in Afghanistan after 2014, an irreversible process, is a major challenge for all the OSCE participating States, particularly those in Central Asia.

We need more than ever to demonstrate efficiency and creativity. Rebuilding confidence is also a question of overcoming sterile patterns of opposition. We must work on the things that unite us and not on those that divide us.

The fact that we are discussing these subjects demonstrates the vitality of an organization that we believe is the natural framework for discussion and co-operation on the future of security in and of Europe. It is important in this regard to prepare for the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act by making the most of the decisions made by the successive Chairmanships until 2015 so as to be able to progress further towards the creation of a security community from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.