

Canadian Delegation to the
Organization for Security & Cooperation
in Europe



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

**DELEGATION OF CANADA TO THE OSCE
STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR FREDERICKA GREGORY
IN RESPONSE TO RUSSIAN DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER GRIGORY
KARASIN
763 MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
4 JUNE 2009**

Madame Chairperson,

Canada joins previous speakers in welcoming the distinguished Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin to the OSCE Permanent Council, and in thanking him for sharing Russia's perspectives on the South Caucasus, notably the Georgia conflict.

In response, Canada would like to make the following points:

- Like the overwhelming majority of other OSCE participating States, Canada clearly has significantly different views than those of Russia when it comes to Georgia. Canada's position on Georgia and support for this country is well known and has been explained on numerous occasions at the OSCE. Today, I will focus my comments on more recent developments.
- As stated by my Foreign Minister, The Hon. Lawrence Cannon, on May 15th, Canada is deeply concerned by the unfortunate impasse we have reached on Georgia and by the termination of the OSCE presence there, for which the Russian Federation bears full responsibility. This development does not send a positive signal or build the much-needed trust and confidence we now need to address European security challenges.

- Georgia wants an OSCE presence and continued OSCE assistance because there are still real needs to be addressed, especially in the aftermath of the armed conflict last August. It is deeply regrettable, therefore, that the OSCE has been prevented from fulfilling this wish of Georgia and from continuing its longstanding presence in this country. I am thinking in particular of the OSCE's important role in conflict prevention and resolution, and its vital work on humanitarian challenges there, including internally displaced persons.
- Moreover, given the increasing tensions and incidents in Georgia, and the military build-up in the region, there is clearly a need for greater international presence, not less.
- For these reasons, Canada calls upon the Russian Federation to reconsider the Greek OSCE Chairman's compromise proposal which aims to extend the mandate of the OSCE presence in Georgia. The Chairman's package provides the best possible basis for consensus by maintaining a status neutral approach and securing a meaningful OSCE presence in all war affected regions of Georgia.
- The Greek Chairmanship can continue to count on Canada's full support for their effective efforts at forging a fair, balanced and status neutral compromise solution to this important issue.
- In closing, we also call on Russia to honour its commitments under the August 12th and September 8th 2008 Agreements. Of particular concern are the so-called border protection agreements that Russia has recently signed with the de facto authorities of the two Georgian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The same applies to Russia's plans to build up its military presence in these two Georgian regions without the consent of the Government of Georgia.

Thank you Madame Chairperson.