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**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR FRANÇOIS ALABRUNE,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE TO THE OSCE,
AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

26 May 2011

**Regarding the sixth National Day Commemorating the Slave Trade,
Slavery and Their Abolition**

Ten years ago, on 10 May 2001, the French Parliament adopted a law recognizing the slave trade and slavery as a crime against humanity. France was the first State to legally recognize the African slave trade and slavery as a crime against humanity.

France also declared a national day of commemoration. Thus, since 2006, 10 May has been the National Day Commemorating the Slave Trade, Slavery and Their Abolition. On 10 May 2011, President Nicolas Sarkozy delivered an address that was circulated to delegations (SEC.DEL/179/11).

This Day is an occasion to deplore the continued relevance of the topic of slavery and trafficking in human beings. Modern slavery, which can take the form of forced labour, domestic slavery and trafficking in women and children, is a major criminal activity. It is estimated that, worldwide, between 800,000 and 900,000 people, 15 per cent of whom are minors, are victims of it.

France therefore calls for universal ratification of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Convention). France further reaffirms its commitment to the efforts led by the OSCE to counter trafficking in human beings through its support for the work of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, for the projects carried out by the field missions and for the activities of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.