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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANVAR AZIMOV,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

14 January 2010

On the beginning of the Kazakh Chairmanship of the OSCE

Mr. Chairman,

We warmly welcome the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, Mr. Kanat Saudabayev, State Secretary and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, to today's meeting of the Permanent Council. We listened with particular interest to the video address by Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of Kazakhstan, and to the statement by the new OSCE Chairman-in-Office.

We should like to sincerely congratulate our Kazakh partners as they take up the duties of their difficult and responsible assignment in the OSCE. This is without exaggeration a signal event in the history of our Organization. The path leading to the achievement of the goal set for itself by Kazakhstan was, as we all very well remember, a long and thorny one. All the more significant and weighty therefore are the Chairmanship powers that the Kazakh side has deservedly been accorded.

We intend to support in every possible way the work of the Chairman-in-Office and of his closely-knit team both in Vienna and in Astana. In the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan will always find a consistent supporter of any constructive initiatives aimed at strengthening and enhancing the effectiveness of this pan-European organization.

We share the assessments expressed regarding the state of affairs in the OSCE, the approaches to the solution of the critical tasks facing it, and the basic priorities set by the Chairmanship. We wholeheartedly welcome the intention to bring East and West closer together in an understanding of the key issues involved in the present-day world order, to overcome the unsound preoccupation with so-called "dividing lines", "double standards" and "zero sum games", and also to strengthen the fundamental rule of decision by consensus.

From the very outset Russia has warmly endorsed Kazakhstan's initiative calling for the convening in 2010 of an OSCE jubilee summit. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov stated as much in his address to the Ministerial Council meeting in Athens. We take the view that a summit meeting of this kind is important for our Organization for a number of reasons. The very fact of convening so representative a forum after a period of a whole decade during

which our leaders did not come together within the OSCE would help to raise the Organization's authority and make it more essential as well as to strengthen confidence and reinvigorate co-operation among participating States.

A possible summit meeting of this kind could make a genuine contribution to the resolution of key problems of security within the Organization's area of responsibility and to the strengthening of the OSCE itself.

We are interested in having such a meeting impart an impetus to the work on the agenda approved at the Athens Ministerial Council meeting, including the further pursuit of the "Corfu Process", whose objective it is to restore in the work of the OSCE a comprehensive approach both in terms of a balance between the three "baskets" and from the point of view of the geographic outreach of projects and programmes. Further goals are to continue the dialogue on issues of "hard" security, among other things for the purpose of updating the Vienna Document of the Negotiations on Confidence-and Security-Building Measures, to restore the viability of the regime set out in the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty), to draw up common principles for conflict resolution, and to more effectively counter new threats and challenges, particularly terrorism and trafficking in narcotic drugs.

It is no less important that we revive a number of commitments as regards the human dimension that have been undeservedly forgotten, above all those concerning the freedom of movement and the liberalization of visa regimes. In our view there is no need to restate the fact that freedom of movement is one of the most essential and basic democratic freedoms and human rights, a point enshrined in a number of fundamental OSCE documents, including the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe. In this connection it would be useful to conduct, under the aegis of the Chairmanship, a separate dedicated workshop on freedom of movement for officials of consular and migration services, with the emphasis specifically on the problems connected with the removal of visa barriers and the facilitation of arrangements in this area.

Lastly, a summit meeting of this kind could genuinely help to stimulate the process of reforming the OSCE, push forward the work of completing its institutional structuring, strengthen its decision-making bodies, enhance the effectiveness of its structures and institutions, and correct the functional and geographic imbalances that exist in the activities of the Organization.

We are grateful to the Kazakh Chairmanship for its announced intention to consider in a substantive and constructive manner the subjects I have mentioned, to seek the achievement of positive results and to further develop and strengthen the relevant provisions dealing with these subjects in OSCE documents. We welcome the readiness expressed to discuss within the Organization the proposal advanced by the President of Russia for the drawing up of a Treaty on European Security.

It goes without saying that the closest possible attention should be paid to the proposal contained in the Kazakh President's video message to declare 1 August, the date on which in 1975 the historic Helsinki Act was signed, as OSCE Day.

We should also like to mention separately the slogan adopted by the Kazakh Chairmanship, formulated as it is in four words heavy with meaning: confidence, traditions,

transparency and tolerance. The timeliness and topicality of these concepts is graphically confirmed by the period of transition through which our Organization is currently passing. Following the well-known events of the spring of 1999 in Yugoslavia and of August 2008 in South Ossetia, when the OSCE was unable first to prevent and then to stop armed confrontation, the spilling of blood and innocent human casualties, we are faced with much painstaking work if we are to restore confidence in the OSCE, which after all was established to pursue the lofty goals implicit in its name “Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe”.

This restoration of confidence should begin with the overcoming of the political prejudices and inert thinking characteristic of the period of bloc-against-bloc confrontation. It is no secret that in their statements and practical activities a number of our partners continue to be guided by the unacceptable principles of “us-them”, “teacher-pupil” or “leader-led”, a point rightfully noted by the Kazakh President in his video address.

Confidence in the OSCE on the part of the participating States must also be restored by increasing the authority of the Organization itself and by seeing to it that its agenda focuses fully on genuinely meaningful issues. The time has come to transform the OSCE from a consultative mechanism into a fully fledged modern organization within the terms of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, while at the same time conferring on it a legal identity and legal capacity of its own. It is obvious that unless an OSCE Charter is adopted, it will hardly be possible for the Organization to assume its rightful place in the European security architecture that is being created and to participate in an authoritative manner in resolving current international and regional problems. The establishment of a working group to draft consensus-based proposals on strengthening the legal status of the OSCE could, in our opinion, help to resolve this problem.

Under the notion of traditions we should understand an unswerving adherence to the principles set out in the fundamental documents of the CSCE/OSCE adopted by consensus, including the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter for European Security and its substantive part – the Platform for Co-operative Security. One of the most essential OSCE commitments, adopted at the highest level, is the consensus principle, which underlies the adoption of decisions in our Organization. We shall all have to work together to strengthen this fundamental norm and to see to it that we are unswervingly guided by it in our practical work.

The Kazakh Chairmanship has very rightly set itself the task of increasing transparency in the work of the OSCE. There is a need to ensure clarity, *inter alia* regarding such sensitive questions as the participation of non-governmental organizations in OSCE activities, the appointment of heads of field operations and institutions, senior officials and members of the core teams of the missions dispatched by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) to monitor elections in participating States, the preparation by these teams of their reports, and also the process of selecting countries where presidential or parliamentary elections are to be monitored. Constant attention must also be directed at the budgetary and, particularly, the extrabudgetary projects being conducted by the OSCE.

Lastly, the word “tolerance” frequently heard within the walls of our Organization presupposes a greater than present-day acceptance of mutual concerns and shortcomings, respectful dialogue, the cessation of a confrontational and often openly offensive rhetoric,

and the strengthening of interaction between different peoples, religions, cultures and civilizations.

We agree that the OSCE must continue to actively involve itself in conflict resolution. However much each conflict may be unique, it is necessary to be guided by the general principles laid down for their resolution in the Charter of the United Nations and the Helsinki Final Act. Our position here is based on the belief that there is an imperative need for peaceful, negotiated ways of resolving crisis situations while maintaining the primary responsibility of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Russia supports, and intends to actively participate in, the events planned for this year by the Kazakh Chairmanship. In addition to the jubilee summit following the example of the United Nations, I am referring here in particular to the informal meeting of foreign ministers in Almaty, the High-Level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination in Astana, the OSCE Trans-Asian Parliamentary Forum, the Conference on the Prevention of Terrorism, the Third Astana Economic Forum and also the seminar on the problems of elections and the conference dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the Copenhagen Document.

We agree with the idea expressed by Minister Saudabayev of extending the duration of the OSCE Annual Security Review Conference, and we are prepared to consider concrete proposals by the Chairmanship to that end.

It is our view that the list already published must be supplemented by a series of events timed to coincide with an important date to be marked this year, as mentioned in the video message by the President of Kazakhstan. I am referring here to the 65th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. You will all remember that at the Athens Ministerial Council meeting the ministers adopted a declaration that marks a useful contribution to the effort to combat attempts to falsify and rewrite our common history.

We are also looking forward to the holding this year of the latest in a series of OSCE drug trafficking conferences so as to provide an opportunity for a comprehensive review of ways of countering the traffic in narcotic drugs, including the proliferation of Afghan heroin and of the precursors required for its production, the interdiction of the routes used for the supply of Latin American cocaine to the countries of the OSCE, and also the production of synthetic narcotic drugs in a number of European countries and their export. This event could make a genuine contribution to the global efforts to combat the narcotic threat, including the threat emanating from the territory of Afghanistan.

Russia is also prepared to continue to make a concrete contribution to the development of interaction between the OSCE and Afghanistan on the basis of the relevant decision adopted at the Madrid Ministerial Council meeting. We intend, specifically, to continue with the implementation of the project to train Afghan narcotics policemen at the specialized facility of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs located at Domodedovo.

We are counting on our Kazakh partners to undertake further efforts to raise the profile of the economic component in the work of the OSCE. We support an active exchange of views on the issues connected with the development of trans-Eurasian transport corridors at the 18th Economic and Environmental Forum. We take the view that the migration problem should also remain at the focus of attention by the OSCE.

As regards the humanitarian field we think it important to stress the development of co-operation and the exchange of positive experience among participating States on such subjects as assisting in the promotion of tolerance and intercultural dialogue, combating manifestations of neo-fascism, protecting the rights of national minorities and freedom of movement, all of which are of current concern to all of us. We also think it appropriate to discuss the question of how best to deal with the current excessive emphasis on work within the OSCE's human rights "basket".

In conclusion, we should once again like to wish Kazakhstan every success in its 2010 chairmanship, which we expect to be a dynamic one and one aimed at progress in the common interests of all of us. Russia, I repeat, intends to do everything it can to promote the successful work of the Chairman-in-Office. All the best.

Thank you for your attention.