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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

**DELEGATION OF CANADA TO THE OSCE
STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR FREDERICKA GREGORY
778TH MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
29 OCTOBER 2009**

**IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORT BY THE OSCE HIGH COMMISSIONER ON NATIONAL
MINORITIES, AMBASSADOR VOLLEBAEK**

Madame Chairperson,

We would like to join others in warmly welcoming Ambassador Vollebaek back to the Permanent Council and thank him for his comprehensive report, including the focus he gave to the state of language policy and its role in fostering minority rights. As an officially bilingual country, Canada understands the value and importance of such language policies as a tool for respecting diversity while building unity in our society.

Canada reaffirms its appreciation for the invaluable work of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, and his team for their quiet, persistent and focused diplomacy and activities.

In our view, there continues to be a direct link between respecting societal diversity and security and stability. In fact, history reminds us that the treatment of minorities has been at the heart of many of our regional conflicts

Finding the political will to translate our values into action and ensuring that we continue to hold to account those who violate human rights is in the interest of us all. Supporting those who are making sincere efforts to advance the human rights of their populations is also in our collective interest from a security perspective.

Canada welcomes and appreciates the HCNM's focus on Central Asia this past year, through your capacity-building work and the dissemination of best practices on minority rights and inter-ethnic relations. We also welcome the positive uptake by the Ukraine and the Russian Federation regarding the HCNM's efforts on facilitating a constructive dialogue between Kiev and Moscow regarding various minorities challenges, including the Crimea.

We also hope that in one not too distant future, the High Commissioner can continue his activities and work in all of war effected regions of Georgia, including Abkhazia and South-Ossetia, because the humanitarian needs there should not be forgotten.

We subscribe to the old adage that “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” – this adage is particularly relevant to the work of the HCNM

The High commissioner and his team can count on Canada’s continued support, including on integration matters. Keep up your fine work!

Thank you.