



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
OSCE Centre in Almaty**

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***Opening Remarks  
Roundtable on Combating Extremism, 1 – 2 July 2004  
Ms. Beata Martin-Rozumilowicz, Officer in Charge***

Good morning Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen .

On behalf of the OSCE Centre in Almaty and Ambassador Ivar Vikki, I would like to thank all of you for your participation and input in today's very important event. As many of you are aware, the OSCE and the ODIHR are continually involved in issues relating to conflict resolution and comprehensive security. As such, efforts to combat extremism fall clearly within our remit.

Today, we have brought together a superb group of international and regional experts who will address the multi-faceted nature of this issue. It is my hope that by the end of tomorrow, we may be able to move the agenda forward on addressing issues of extremism in the Central Asian context.

The intention of this event is to mark the first step towards a series of roundtables on extremism throughout the Central Asian region. As a result, I would like to thank the government of Kazakhstan for their support and co-operation on this project. I think this is an important indication of their commitment in this regard.

The effort to combat extremism is one that has deep historical roots. In the process of state building, many nations have come to understand that toleration of other groups, other belief

structures, other points of view is the cornerstone of a functioning and long-lasting democratic form of rule. Democratic institutions and elections are a key element to combatting extremism, providing marginalized groups with the ability to influence policy outcomes and co-opting them into a system of communication and co-operation.

In the opposite regard, we need look no further than the last century for clear illustration of how destructive and devisive extremist doctrines have been, as well as the inevitable and often tragic results that they have produced.

As such, the OSCE and the ODIHR are committed to opening dialogue and paths for co-operation between differing group in order to minimize the prospectives for conflict and to increase the potential for security overall.

I thank you for your attention and wish you a successful and productive roundtable.