

PC.DEL/682/09
3 September 2009

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

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

3 September 2009

Regarding the report by Brigadier General Periotto

Madam Chairperson,

We should like to welcome Brigadier General Costanzo Periotto, Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office for Article IV of the Dayton Peace Accords. We have listened carefully to his report.

As a guarantor of the Dayton Accords and a member of the Contact Group, Russia attaches great importance to the implementation of the Florence Agreement on Subregional Arms Control within the terms of Article IV of the Dayton package, viewing it as an effective instrument for maintaining stability and strengthening confidence-building measures in the Western Balkans.

On the whole, we share Brigadier General Periotto's assessments regarding the progress made in the implementation of the aforementioned agreement. During the 13 years that have elapsed since its entry into force, the verification and arms control process in the Western Balkans has been fairly successful in our opinion. There has indeed been considerable progress, accompanied by a number of positive trends in the member countries.

The defence structures of the entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina have been integrated and a single State verification agency has been established. As a result of this, Bosnia and Herzegovina became a participant in the Agreement on Subregional Arms Control as a single party. In early 2007 Montenegro joined that arms control regime.

The exchange of information among the parties has been made easier by switching to electronic format using the OSCE Communications Network. Evidence of the successful implementation of the agreement can be seen in the decision to reduce the number of annual meetings of the Subregional Consultative Commission and in the simplified procedures drawn up at the initiative of the parties to the regime for reducing the holdings of weapons limited by the agreement. The parties have also confirmed their readiness to voluntarily reduce the size of their armed forces.

We believe that developments of this kind have helped to strengthen measures for confidence-building, co-operation and mutual understanding both at the regional level and among the parties to the agreement themselves. This has largely been possible because of the efforts of the parties to the regime themselves – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia. Here too we see the contribution by the Personal Representative, who patiently and carefully helped in reaching agreed decisions on arms reduction matters. We are convinced that any inter-ethnic differences must also be resolved solely with the aid of similar consensus-based steps, without any formulas being imposed from the outside. It is precisely this kind of approach that is the key to the peaceful and good-neighbourly coexistence of the different peoples.

In our view, these achievements have created the necessary conditions for the further transfer to the parties themselves of the powers to oversee arms control. We assume that the two-phase plan drawn up by Brigadier General Periotto will be implemented gradually, with full account taken of the capabilities and wishes of the Balkan parties to the agreement. This kind of approach was also set out in the appeal by Contact Group representatives to the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office for Article IV of the Dayton Peace Accords on 1 September 2009.

In conclusion, we should like to wish Brigadier General Periotto and the staff of his office continued success in their work.

Thank you for your attention.