

Delegation of France

**STATEMENT BY MR. YANN HWANG,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE, AT THE
953rd MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

16 May 2013

**Regarding the commemoration of the National Day of Remembrance of the
Slave Trade, Slavery and their Abolition**

As we have just heard the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, the French delegation would like to take advantage of today's Permanent Council to inform you of the National Day of Remembrance of the Slave Trade, Slavery and their Abolition, which was commemorated throughout France on 10 May.

France is the first State to have declared the black slave trade and slavery a "crime against humanity". A committee formed by law on 21 May 2001 is responsible for submitting proposals to the Government. These aim to encourage research into the topic and promote all forms of awareness-raising, as well as the dissemination of documentary resources to improve understanding of the history of the slave trade, slavery and their abolition within the broadest possible audience, and among school pupils in particular.

Given its history, France has a direct link to the tragedy of slavery and the fight for its abolition, and is particularly committed to the fight against modern forms of slavery. Beyond its activities through the OSCE, France supports international efforts to combat trafficking in human beings. France calls for universal ratification of the Additional Protocol to the Palermo Convention, which it signed in 2000 and ratified in 2002. France is also a party to various conventions of the International Labour Organization on forced labour and the international Convention on the Rights of the Child, one Protocol to which relates to trafficking in children.

In conclusion, allow me to quote part of a statement made by the French President, Mr. François Hollande, to mark the National Day of Remembrance on 10 May: "Freedom is not a gift of nature or an *aquis* of civilization; it is a learning process, a daily struggle, a victory that is never truly won. In a word, freedom is a responsibility that peoples and individuals must prove worthy of – and one for which they must continue to fight, in the name of progress and of humanity. But also in the name of solidarity with the world."

Thank you.