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Delegation of Switzerland

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF SWITZERLAND AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

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In response to the report by Ambassador Tim Guldemann, Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo

Mr. Chairman,

The Swiss delegation warmly welcomes both Ambassador Zannier, Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and Ambassador Guldemann, Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMIK), to this meeting of the Permanent Council and thanks them for their reports.

Both presentations, but in particular the comprehensive and well-founded final report on the work of the OSCE Mission over the last 12 months, give us an insight into the most recent international developments, the institutional changes, the situation regarding the Kosovo Serbs and the ongoing activities of the two missions.

There is no longer any need to argue in favour of the usefulness of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo — it remains an important instrument, recognized by all sides and thus having unimpeachable credentials, for promoting and monitoring the democratic and political development of Kosovo.

Switzerland believes that the continuing efforts of OMIK to protect and promote the rights of the non-Albanian communities, in particular the Kosovo Serbs but also Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians, are of great importance.

During the current critical period of transition, characterized among other things by the restructuring of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the OSCE Mission is continuing undisturbed to carry out its monitoring and support activities in a radically altered environment. Kosovo's declaration of independence and the entry into force of its constitution have created new facts. Both organizations should adapt themselves to these developments by seeking the best modalities for effective co-operation.

We welcome the fact that the OSCE Mission continues to play the role expected of it, given its comprehensive and effective field presence. OMIK's decentralized presence links the international community with the communities in Kosovo, all the ministries, Parliament and the independent public institutions. This enables the OSCE Mission to keep up to date at

all times with new developments and, if necessary, to take action — a function that, given the as yet unstable general situation in Kosovo, continues to be of great importance.

The success of the OSCE Mission's work during this difficult period of transition is to be credited not least of all to its head, Ambassador Guldemann, and to his team of international and local staff. He should be fully commended for his tireless efforts over the past 12 months. Our thanks go also to the new head of UNMIK and former director of the Conflict Prevention Centre, Ambassador Zannier. We wish them both every success in their future activities.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.