



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Office in Tajikistan**

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Delivered by Amb. Vladimir Pryakhin, Head of Office, the OSCE Office in Tajikistan

Working session I: Transnational challenges to security in the OSCE area

Mr. Chairman,

As of today, 1 July, the OSCE Office in Tajikistan works according to a new mandate, which remains robust, broad and balanced. The new mandate explicitly tasks the OSCE Office to:

... contribute to stability and security, to prevent conflicts and take measures for crisis management, as well as in the areas of, *inter alia*, police-related activities, border management and security and anti-trafficking.

Particularly within border management and anti-trafficking, the OSCE Office in Tajikistan is well positioned to make a considerable contribution towards implementation of Ministerial Council Decision on engagement with Afghanistan (MC.DEC 4/07). I'm convinced that among the OSCE participating States, Tajikistan is singularly best-placed as a platform for providing OSCE assistance to Afghanistan - not only because of the shared border and geographic proximity, but because shared history, culture and language tie the two countries together.

It is encouraging to note that the Government of Tajikistan has communicated its readiness to offer support for the implementation of MC.DEC 4/07 and has already submitted several concrete proposals to the OSCE. Tajikistan, of course, has a vested interest in the security and prosperity of its southern neighbour.

There are few areas of OSCE activities where participating States converge to such a degree as around support for securing the Tajik border with Afghanistan. While efforts are underway to secure the border, it is also important to promote stability and prosperity through increased trade. The Office is also addressing issues going beyond the Border Management and Security Concept as transit transportation, cross-border trade and agri-business development activities. Likewise, the Office is exploring possible activities in the media and environmental fields.

OSCE involvement in the border management agenda in Tajikistan started with a needs assessment mission in July 2006. A main objective was to identify gaps and needs that could be met by the OSCE, complementing the efforts already being made by the EU Border Management Programme for Central Asia (BOMCA), as well as other stakeholders. Close co-ordination, particularly with a key stakeholder and partner as the European Commission Delegation, has been a priority from day one.

Taking the lead from the conclusion of our key note speaker for this session, Ambassador Pierre Morel, the EU Special Representative for Central Asia, the OSCE has moved from the concept and document stage to become operational on the ground. The arrival of a Border Advisory Group in February 2008, to assist Tajikistan in developing a comprehensive National Border Strategy and Implementation Plan, is only the first in a series of events that will unfold this year. I will not list proposed activities here, as they have already been circulated and discussed elsewhere, but would like to highlight the proposed Border Management Staff College, which is a project given the highest priority by the OSCE Office in Tajikistan.

This will be an OSCE staff college which would provide for a single point of knowledge delivery, combined with research and development, in the area of border security and management, thereby providing OSCE participating States and Partners for Cooperation with access to the latest thinking, methodologies, techniques and technology in the OSCE area. Simultaneously, this option would promote and facilitate cross-border dialogue and cooperation, information sharing, the exchange and development of best practices and the promotion/implementation of international norms, practices and legislation within OSCE participating States and Partners for Cooperation. The Tajik side has officially agreed to host the Staff College and planning is very far advanced.

The OSCE Office in Tajikistan is ready to support and participate in the EU-OSCE-UNODC conference on Border Management and Drug Control, planned for October, where we look forward to the presentation of a first draft of the National Border Strategy.

I call on you to continue your support for the OSCE Office in Tajikistan to enable us to successfully implement projects within border management and security as well as other activities to promote stability in the region through engagement with Afghanistan.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.