



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
High Commissioner on National Minorities

Opening Remarks
by
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OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities

to the
High-Level Launching Event
of the Joint Project
“Policing in Multi-Ethnic Kazakhstan”

[Check against delivery]

Astana, Kazakhstan – 26 June 2012

Mr. Deputy Minister,
Dear Mr. Tugzhanov,
Members of Parliament
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to be back in Astana and to be able to address you here today. Let me begin by expressing my appreciation to the Government of Kazakhstan, represented here by the Deputy Minister of the Interior, Kairat Tynybekov, for its co-operation and commitment, and to the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan, represented by its Deputy Chairperson, Mr. Eraly Tugzhanov, who has personally contributed to making today's event happen.

Two years ago, in this very city, the heads of the OSCE participating States reaffirmed their support to comprehensive security that is “based on trust and transparency in the politico-military field, on rational economic and environmental policy and on the full-fledged observation of human rights, basic freedoms and the rule of law.”

Today's event bears witness to Kazakhstan's commitment to securing a stable and prosperous future. Respect for human rights is a prerequisite for long-term stability and prosperity in our societies. The Government of Kazakhstan has understood that human rights, including minority rights, and the rule of law cannot be respected and upheld without a dedicated, professional and competent police force.

As the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, as well as an ordinary citizen, I appreciate the crucial role the police can play in ensuring peace, order and stability in our increasingly diverse societies. However, the

credibility of and trust in the police depend on the police being representative. I believe that if we make the police service more representative of the community it serves, if we ensure good communication between police and the people, including national minority communities, then we will not only strengthen inter-ethnic relations but also increase the operational effectiveness of our police forces.

Based on this understanding, my office, together with the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan, the Ministry of the Interior of Kazakhstan and the OSCE Centre in Astana, have developed a joint project “Policing in Multi-Ethnic Kazakhstan”, the beginning of which we are marking today. The project reflects my belief that policing that is sensitive to the multi-ethnic composition of society can significantly contribute to the prevention and timely diffusion of potential inter-ethnic conflict situations. I hope that our co-operation and sharing of experiences will familiarize the relevant institutions in Kazakhstan with some good and useful approaches to policing in other multi-ethnic societies and, thus, benefit the society as a whole.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ethnic and religious diversity have become the norm rather than the exception. In this context, there are instances when minority communities perceive the police as a tool of repression rather than protection; when minorities think they are targets rather than beneficiaries of police work and when they have neither trust nor a stake in the police force, which is supposed to serve all citizens equally. Under such circumstances, trust and confidence not only in the police but in the State as a whole is undermined, since the police are seen to represent the State. People begin to rely on informal ties and personal networks for protection and basic security, which undermines the rule of law and challenges State institutions and sovereignty. A lack of appropriate training for operating in

a multi-ethnic society, a lack of diversity in the composition of the police service and discriminatory practices generate negative reactions towards the police among minority communities and may turn the police into a potential catalyst for conflict rather than a guarantor of peace and stability.

Policing that is based on a relationship of trust and confidence, and which is built on regular communication and practical co-operation between the police and minorities, benefits all equally. Minorities benefit from policing that is more sensitive to their concerns, and more respectful and responsive to their needs for personal protection and access to justice. The police benefit from greater effectiveness, since trust, good communication and co-operation are keys to effective policing in any community. The State benefits both from the integration of society and from the greater effectiveness of its police work.

The *Recommendations on Policing in Multi-Ethnic Societies* were developed precisely in order to provide guidance and a practical way forward for States seeking to facilitate integration and at the same time to develop professional, service-orientated community policing. The project we are launching together will assist in making these recommendations an integral part of both teaching and practising policing in Kazakhstan. The workshops within the framework of this project will provide police officers with the tools to handle situations that can negatively affect inter-ethnic relations and stability, and to promote positive interaction with diverse communities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Introducing community-based policing is a difficult task to accomplish. It is a challenge for all of the OSCE participating States. I am pleased that we have committed partners in Kazakhstan. You have great human resources, and I am confident our future co-operation will be mutually beneficial and enriching.

Let me end by reminding everyone that this is only the beginning. Police reform requires long-term, sustained efforts. I am optimistic that you are in a position to succeed thanks to political support at the highest level, and I wish you luck in the work that lies ahead. I look forward to working with you and I am convinced that the experiences you will have along the way will prove valuable for us in our work throughout the OSCE area.

Thank you for your attention.