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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANVAR AZIMOV,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE JOINT MEETING OF THE OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY
CO-OPERATION AND THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

10 March 2010

Conflict prevention and crisis management in the OSCE area

Mr. Chairman of the Permanent Council,
Madam Chairperson of the Forum for Security Co-operation,

Like other countries, Russia regards the OSCE's activities in the field of early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation as one of the key tasks of the Organization. We are also in favour of increasing the OSCE's capabilities and potential in this sensitive field. However, unlike a number of our partners, Russia is proposing the strengthening of the consensus basis for the OSCE's work, primarily in the area of crisis management, as well as the elaboration and adoption of uniform principles for conflict resolution.

We believe that any OSCE activities in the field of crisis management must continue to be based on the unconditional observance of consensus at all stages of the crisis cycle, and on the clearly expressed consent of the parties to the conflict with respect to all the OSCE's activities in a conflict settlement process, through a mandate of the collective bodies – the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) – or their joint decisions. It is also important that the OSCE does not limit itself to the post-Soviet area and the Balkans, and pays proper attention to conflict situations to the west of Vienna.

We reaffirm our concrete proposal on the strengthening of consensus in the area of crisis management and the elaboration of uniform principles for conflict prevention and resolution, taking into account the particular features of each specific case (the principle of *sui generis*), contained in the Russian draft joint decision of the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC-PC.DEL/1/10/Corr.1 of 19 January 2010).

We cannot agree with the logic of the proposals by certain participating States wishing to make the OSCE more "flexible" through the transfer of some of the sovereign prerogatives of the participating States to the Chairmanship and the creation, in this way, of a kind of supranational structure within the OSCE. In our view, the OSCE already has more than enough "flexibility", which makes it so strikingly different to fully fledged international organizations and which has an ever more noticeable effect on its ability to act, including in

crisis situations. As for the idea put forward by a number of our partners regarding the dismantling of the consensus rule that is fundamental to the work of the OSCE and embodies the sovereign equality of all the participating States, this is in effect a call to change the nature of the OSCE. We see no reason for a “revolution” of this kind, which may prove to be fatal for the OSCE.

What the Organization needs in fact is something quite different – work on clear rules. It is no accident that when considering how to strengthen the effectiveness of the OSCE the Panel of Eminent Persons recommended in 2005 the adoption of an OSCE charter, a draft of which was submitted by Russia in 2007 together with its partners in the Collective Security Treaty Organization. It is also essential to supplement the Rules of Procedure with provisions dealing with the work of the OSCE executive structures, institutions and field missions, to adopt collectively principles to govern the organization of the international observation of national elections, and also to regulate the participation of non-governmental organizations in OSCE events and the process for the appointment of mission heads. The effectiveness of the work by the field operations should be assessed on the basis of how effective they are in implementing the provisions of paragraph 41 of the Charter for European Security regarding the gradual transfer of their functions to the host countries.

I should again like to stress – so that it is perfectly clear to all our partners – without real progress in the reform of the OSCE and clear confirmation of the immutability of the consensus principle, we can hardly expect progress in our efforts to strengthen the Organization’s ability to act and to make the OSCE more useful.

As we see it, the OSCE’s capabilities in the field of conflict prevention and crisis management are to be strengthened through the relaunch, updating and, where necessary, further development of the existing potential created within the Organization over the past two decades. There is no point in reinventing the wheel – the OSCE is by no means impoverished when it comes to the set of mechanisms it has amassed over the years. The 100-page compendium of mechanisms and procedures to deal with crisis situations (SEC.GAL/120/08 of 20 June 2008) prepared by the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) is evidence of this. It makes sense to “blow off the dust” that has gathered on these procedures and see how they could be adapted to today’s needs.

Many provisions of the 1993 Stabilizing Measures for Localized Crisis Situations remain particularly relevant, as the Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre, Mr. Herbert Salber, mentioned in his statement.

We believe it is essential to conduct a thorough review of the instruments for dealing with crises contained in the Charter for European Security of 1999. I am referring first and foremost to the mechanism for the rapid deployment of civilian expertise – REACT (Rapid Expert Assistance and Co-operation Teams), provided for in paragraph 42 of the Charter for European Security and put into effect by Permanent Council Decision No. 364 of 29 June 2000. This capacity was in fact created ten years ago to provide a rapid response to crises and ensure the expeditious dispatch, in consultation with participating States and with the agreement of the host country, of small groups of experts to pre-conflict, conflict and post-conflict zones to perform various functions under a Permanent Council mandate.

Unfortunately, the capabilities of this instrument remain undeveloped despite the fact that considerable budget funds were spent on its creation, primarily on software. Today the

“roster” of multidisciplinary specialists is mainly used by the Department of Human Resources for filling seconded posts in missions. We firmly believe that the possibilities of this mechanism are far greater than serving as a “supplier of staff” to field operations. It would be important to conduct a detailed inventory of REACT and also to devise a mechanism to begin using these teams in the field of crisis management under a decision of the Permanent Council and/or Forum in agreement with interested States and conflicting parties. We believe that the CPC should play a major role in the operational management of REACT.

We are impressed by a number of ideas contained in the food-for-thought paper prepared by ten European Union countries on strengthening the OSCE capacities in the field of conflict prevention and crisis management (PC.DEL/90/10 of 16 February 2010). This concerns proposals on further developing the role of the Permanent Council and the executive structures of the OSCE, including the Secretariat and the CPC, in the field of early warning. In concrete terms, this means drawing the attention of the participating States to the potential threat of an escalation of tension and drafting proposals on possible measures in response, including the use of the OSCE’s existing instruments and mechanisms under a decision of the decision-making bodies. We are ready to work on strengthening the role of the OSCE Secretary General in these matters, in particular, by providing him with an opportunity to initiate, in consultation with the Chairmanship, the convening of emergency meetings of the Permanent Council.

We support the idea of improving the co-ordination of the activities of all the OSCE executive structures in conflict prevention under the common leadership of the Secretary General, and increasing transparency in matters of accountability and the provision of information to participating States on potential threats, crisis situations and plans for post-conflict rehabilitation.

We agree with the idea of strengthening the role of the Permanent Council in crisis management through the regular inclusion in its agenda of the problem of conflicts throughout the OSCE area and the discussion of relevant reports by the Secretary General and information from the CPC and other institutions. Thought might also be given to the development of organizational modalities for emergency meetings of the Permanent Council and/or joint meetings of the Permanent Council and the Forum in the event of the threat of crisis, for example, at the request of a participating State and/or for the discussion of “warning reports” by the Chairmanship and/or the Secretary General.

We welcome the specific proposals for stepping up co-operation between the OSCE and other organizations on the problem of conflicts, on the basis of the Platform for Co-operative Security of 1999. The OSCE could act as a co-ordinating mechanism, with whose assistance organizations operating in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions would support one another, making use of the specific advantages of each organization.

It would also be worth considering once again whether it would be useful to create an ad hoc consultative mechanism to co-ordinate the measures of other international bodies in response to crises, as mentioned in the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century adopted in Maastricht in 2003.

We believe that the practical implementation of at least some of these aforementioned proposals could considerably improve the OSCE’s potential in crisis management, salvage

the Organization's reputation that has been so tarnished by the events in Yugoslavia in 1999 and in South Ossetia in August 2008, and, most importantly, restore confidence in the Organization on the part of all participating States.

Thank you for your attention.