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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANVAR AZIMOV,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

9 September 2010

Situation regarding the observance of the rights of Roma and Sinti

Mr. Chairperson,

The situation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE's area of responsibility continues to be a matter of justified concern. Attention has already been called to this fact in a special statement by the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights as well as in statements by the representatives of the United States of America and the European Union (EU).

Despite the 2003 OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area, the existence of other large-scale projects and the devotion of substantial resources, including financial ones, the events of recent years in a number of participating States have shown that the situation regarding the integration of Roma and Sinti remains far from ideal.

We believe that some of our partners should pay greater attention to the recommendations by the European Commission on combating racism and intolerance. We share the view of Mr. Thomas Hammarberg, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, regarding the possibility of improving the situation of Roma and Sinti by resolving the problem of mass statelessness – the EU's Achilles heel.

The problems facing the Roma and Sinti population, one of the most numerous national minorities within the EU, require the adoption of effective measures so as to prevent these problems from becoming even more widespread.

In this connection, we urge the Chairmanship and the relevant OSCE institutions not to ignore these negative trends, to carefully monitor the situation as regards the implementation of participating States' commitments in this sphere and to respond in a timely manner to cases involving the violation of the rights of Roma and Sinti in our Organization's area of responsibility.

Thank you for your attention.