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

4 November 2010

On the Chairperson-in-Office's personal representatives for tolerance

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome the personal representatives of the Chairperson-in-Office concerned with countering various forms of intolerance – Ambassador Adil Akhmetov, Rabbi Andrew Baker and Mr. Mario Mauro. We take note of the information they have provided on the work that has already been done along with their views on the further measures to be taken.

We agree with our colleagues that the OSCE and its institutions must direct priority attention at issues having to do with discrimination, since negative phenomena of this kind are becoming increasingly widespread throughout the entire Euro-Atlantic area. The challenges, on whose successful resolution – and I say this without exaggeration – the future of human civilization depends, include the strengthening of tolerance, the combating of various manifestations of xenophobia and of religious and political extremism, and the countering of the spread of ultra-rightwing and leftwing ideologies, particularly of a terrorist or neo-Nazi nature.

It is today a matter of extreme urgency that countries and religious organizations join forces to support far-ranging dialogue among civilizations and to counter new challenges to global and regional security. We in Russia, a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional country, have a particularly clear understanding and acute sense of this.

We are convinced that if it is to be able to tackle successfully ambitious tasks of this kind, the OSCE needs a new, politically oriented, effective and co-ordinated mechanism. We have on more than one occasion, including at the recent Review Conference in Warsaw, set out the Russian point of view as regards the kind of format in which the OSCE might most effectively continue its work to promote tolerance. I would merely mention that one approach might be, for example, to consolidate the three personal representative posts into a single position, naturally on the condition that the incumbent would work closely with the specialized department of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). Another possible approach might be to transfer to the ODIHR responsibility for the functions of the three personal representatives, while at the same time setting up an

appropriate panel of experts. In our view, an integrated structure of this kind would not only operate more effectively but would also enjoy a higher political profile.

We also believe that, assuming they were given appropriate mandates, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and the High Commissioner on National Minorities could be enlisted to take part in the Organization's co-ordinated work to advance the cause of tolerance.

Our contacts with partners show that a number of participating States are in favour of optimizing the mechanism of the three personal representatives. Within the spirit of Decision No. 13/06 adopted at the Brussels Ministerial Council meeting, we would propose to the Kazakh Chairmanship that it conduct, for example, targeted consultations within the Preparatory Committee. It seems to us that the outcome of those discussions would make it easier for the incoming Lithuanian chairmanship to order its efforts to improve the OSCE's format for its activities in promoting tolerance and combating discrimination.

Thank you for your attention.