

PC.DEL/17/11
13 January 2011

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

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

13 January 2011

Regarding the start of the Lithuanian Chairmanship of the OSCE

Mr. Chairperson,

We join in welcoming the distinguished Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, Mr. Audronius Ažubalis, as Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE. We have listened very attentively to his interesting statement and have acquainted ourselves with the work programme of the Lithuanian Chairmanship.

The Republic of Lithuania is assuming the OSCE Chairmanship at a critical time, for the Astana Summit, the Organization's first summit meeting in 11 years, has provided the necessary impetus for dealing with the task of creating a single and indivisible security community in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian area.

This being the case, it is extremely important to step up the efforts to restore within the Organization a culture of political dialogue on a basis of parity and to turn the positive developments signalled in the Kazakh capital into specific agreements and documents.

To do this, we need to rise above narrowly nationalistic priorities and outdated stereotypes and concentrate instead on the forward-looking aspects of the Organization's agenda for 2011 that unite us. And we should do this without burdening that agenda with what we regard as unnecessary and ambivalent historical assessments of the past. Clearly, no one can dispute the sovereign right of any country to mark commemorative dates in its history. It is something else again if one's own interpretation of such events, regarding which there may be different views, is imposed on others, especially within the framework of an international organization. There is no shortage in European history of historical dates that unite rather than divide the OSCE participating States. It is these that we should in our view focus on in the first instance. After all, the very name of our Organization implies the need for co-operation and consolidation.

The thoughts outlined by the Minister with regard to key priorities for this year are in many respects in line with the Russian approach.

We support the intention of the Lithuanian Chairmanship to continue discussions within the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) of the Russian draft of a Programme for

Further Action in the Field of Arms Control and Confidence- and Security-Building Measures. We hope that by the time of the Ministerial Council meeting in Vilnius the FSC will also have adopted an updated version of the Vienna Document of the Negotiations on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures.

We share Lithuania's desire not to "reinvent the wheel" as regards conflict resolution efforts in the OSCE area and its wish to focus instead on work within agreed formats, guided by realistic approaches and the Hippocratic principle of "first do no harm", and also to take into account the overriding responsibility of the United Nations for maintaining international peace and security.

We trust that in their work in this sphere our Lithuanian colleagues will pursue a geographically balanced policy, without focusing exclusively on the Commonwealth of Independent States. We assume that proper attention will be paid also to the urgent task of drawing up uniform principles for conflict resolution.

We are looking forward to the development of the Russian-United States counter-terrorism initiative on security with respect to tourism, which was put forward at the conference in Astana in October 2010. We are hoping for a successful seminar on this subject during the first six months of this year.

In 2010 Russia co-authored together with the United States, Turkey and a number of member countries of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) a draft counter-narcotics concept for the OSCE. We believe that the adoption of such a concept might be timed to coincide with the conference on drug trafficking planned by the Chairmanship for March 2011. Given that the problem of drug trafficking affects virtually all participating States, we feel that it is wrong for that event to be focused solely on the Central Asian region.

We are prepared to continue to make a tangible contribution to the development of co-operation between the OSCE and Afghanistan on the basis of the relevant decision adopted at the Madrid Ministerial Council meeting, *inter alia* through the implementation of the OSCE project to train Afghan anti-narcotics police at the Domodedovo centre.

We have taken note of the Chairmanship's intention to hold a conference on cyber security in Vienna in May. We assume that the principal goal of the event will be to gauge the usefulness of the OSCE's contribution to the global efforts in this field under the auspices of the United Nations.

At a time when it is necessary to deal with the consequences of the global economic and financial crisis and to work together to counter the growing number of environmental problems, we believe that it is of fundamental importance to once again include in the list of priorities the task of expanding technological and innovative co-operation and of stepping up joint efforts to prevent environmental and man-made disasters. We feel that one of the meetings of the Economic and Environmental Committee might be devoted to this subject. The OSCE platform may also prove useful for discussions with respect to the creation of a new legal framework for energy co-operation. It is our view that the subjects of transport and migration must remain on the agenda for the second dimension.

We are in favour of implementing OSCE commitments with respect to freedom of movement, which have been undeservedly overlooked. It is our conviction that the liberalization of visa regimes must occupy its rightful place among the priorities set by Vilnius. We look forward to the holding of a special OSCE event on this topic in 2011.

We support the OSCE's efforts to promote tolerance, combat xenophobia and develop a dialogue between cultures. Increased attention needs to be given to the problem of the rise in today's world of nationalistic attitudes, religious enmity, manifestations of neo-Nazism and attempts to revise the outcome of the Second World War as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. It is our firm belief that the list of priorities must include the problem of how best to ensure the rights of national minorities, a problem that is being acutely felt in a number of OSCE participating States. In view of the particular urgency of the problem, heightened attention should be paid to trafficking in human beings and violence against Roma and Sinti.

Given all of this, we should clearly also not overlook the question of the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. In our view, however, there ought not to be an excessive emphasis in our work on the task of ensuring these rights and freedoms, especially to the detriment of other no less important subjects, for example the rule of law.

Regarding the Chairmanship's wish to devote greater attention to the participation of non-governmental organizations in OSCE events, we would recall here the thoughts presented on this matter by a number of CSTO countries. We are prepared to discuss them in detail.

It is also important to draw up clear and universally comprehensible rules for the work of the executive structures of the OSCE, primarily the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the field missions. We are in favour of the ODIHR applying the same agreed criteria for fully fledged election monitoring in all OSCE countries without exception. The work of the OSCE field missions must be so structured as to meet as far as possible the requests and needs of the governments of the host countries. Mission heads must be appointed primarily with the consent of the host country.

Turning the OSCE into a genuine international organization and strengthening its inter-State nature and the rule of law in all areas of its activities through the adoption of a charter remains a matter of urgency. For all practical purposes, agreement was reached at the Astana Summit on an extensive set of instructions dealing with the enhancement of the effectiveness of the OSCE. We trust that the Lithuanian Chairmanship will continue the efforts to implement these goals. We also agree with the need to improve programme and budget planning, elaborate a unified scale of contributions and update the financial regulations. It is our hope that other budgetary and financial issues requiring collective efforts, including those outlined in the decision on the 2011 budget, will also receive the necessary attention.

In conclusion, we should like to wish the Republic of Lithuania every success in the difficult task of responsibly guiding the work of the OSCE in 2011 and to stress once more that the Russian Federation stands ready to engage in the most active and constructive co-operation with our Lithuanian partners.

Thank you for your attention.