

Canadian Delegation to the  
Organization for Security & Cooperation  
in Europe



Délégation du Canada auprès de  
l'Organisation pour la sécurité et la coopération  
en Europe

ENGLISH only

**AS DELIVERED**

**DELEGATION OF CANADA TO THE OSCE  
STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR FREDERICKA GREGORY  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF THE NEW  
CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE OF THE OSCE, H.E. MR. AUDRONIUS AZUBALIS,  
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA  
846 MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL  
13 JANUARY 2011**

Thank you Mr. Chairperson,

Canada joins others in warmly welcoming His Excellency, Audronius Azubalis, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, to the Permanent Council for the first time in his capacity as Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, and wishes to thank him for his inaugural address highlighting the Chair's road map for 2011. My delegation lends its support to the Chair's proposed game plan for the coming year, and notes that we share many common priorities for the OSCE's work.

In particular, Canada firmly supports the Chair's commitment to advancing democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, notably freedom of the media, and fostering greater understanding and tolerance within the OSCE region.

To promote democratization and fundamental freedoms, it remains our view that continued efforts are needed to strengthen the OSCE and its affiliated institutions, notably the ODIHR's capacity to observe elections, in partnership with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. The recent Belarus election and its aftermath were disturbing reminders of how easily forward steps can be reversed, and underscores that the work and assistance of the OSCE is still needed today in supporting participating States. That is why Canada fully supports the efforts of the Lithuanian Chairmanship to secure an early agreement with Belarus authorities on the extension of the OSCE Office in Minsk. This would get our year off to a good start.

Mr. Chairman,

The Astana Summit Declaration has tasked Lithuania as OSCE Chair with “organizing a follow-up process” to the OSCE Summit. As we work together on this shared goal, we must be open and honest about the lessons from our Astana experience and why the adoption of a comprehensive forward-looking Action Plan eluded us. This will be helpful for clearing the air and moving forward.

As noted in Astana, Canada’s main priorities for the OSCE’s immediate future center on the four following areas:

- Preserving and enhancing the OSCE’s Human Dimension work;
- Modernizing and strengthening our region’s Conventional Arms Control Regimes and CSBMs;
- Making the OSCE an even more effective tool for conflict prevention and crisis management; and
- Addressing transnational threats and security challenges in and from Afghanistan.

I wish to underscore the pivotal role the OSCE can play in helping to resolve the protracted conflict issues within the OSCE region. In that context, the return of a meaningful OSCE presence and activities in Georgia remains one of our goals.

Mr. Chairman,

Canada agrees with you that transnational threats, such as trafficking of people and drugs, are becoming more complex, interrelated and sophisticated. These threats are affecting the entire OSCE region and need to be addressed by all of us collectively. We believe that the OSCE’s cross-dimensional approach is well placed to deal with these challenges. This is why Canada believes that the OSCE should continue and even enhance its support to Afghanistan and its Central Asian neighbours to improve security, stability and democratisation. The OSCE brings high value-added in building capacity to address crime and security issues such as border security and management, drug trafficking, law enforcement and good governance. Furthermore, it has demonstrated expertise in the support of electoral processes and reforms in Afghanistan. The OSCE can also foster regional cooperation between Afghanistan and its Central Asian neighbours through activities such as joint training programs for border officials. We are convinced that the OSCE can be one of the positive agents of change for addressing the security challenges facing the OSCE region and our Partner for Cooperation, Afghanistan.

I would like to extend Canada’s full support to the OSCE Chairmanship of Lithuania and their goals for 2011. My Delegation looks forward to working closely with the entire Lithuanian team in Vienna and in Vilnius, and with all our partners at the OSCE with a view to achieving tangible progress and steps forward on the most pressing challenges in all three OSCE Dimensions of our work. The same applies to our important collective task of selecting the next OSCE Secretary General during the course of this year, and our efforts

to establish a common set of scales of contribution for this Organization, as well as enhance financial accountability.

In closing, Canada would also like to express special thanks to the outgoing Kazakh Chairmanship for doing its utmost for the OSCE and for relations in the region, and in hosting the historic OSCE Summit in Astana.

Following the Astana Summit, we now have our agenda cut out for us. We must continue to engage in the OSCE's strategic dialogue and work on the future of Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security, but now need – with Lithuania's leadership – to take our dialogue and work to the next level and start working together to deliver concrete results in areas relevant to today's global and regional challenges. Mr. Chairman, you can count on Canada's continued constructive engagement towards this end.

Thank you – Merci - Labai dekoju