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**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF SWITZERLAND AT THE
908th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

19 April 2012

**In response to the address by Ambassador Konstantin Dolgov,
Commissioner on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law of the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation**

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank Ambassador Dolgov for his visit to the Permanent Council and for his presentation.

Your appearance here is a good initiative, for which we congratulate the Russian Federation. It underscores a readiness to deal in a proactive way with human dimension issues. We are convinced that, despite all the challenges it faces at home in this area, the Russian Federation can contribute much to the strengthening of the human dimension in the OSCE area.

We share your view that no single participating State has a perfect human dimension track record. We are all called upon to seek through open and constructive dialogue ways of improving respect for human dimension commitments.

With regard to the thematic priorities referred to by Ambassador Dolgov for work in the human dimension within the OSCE, we should like to make the point that the planned events as well as the working plan for the Human Dimension Committee provide the necessary framework for a proper discussion of these concerns.

As far as the election reports and recommendations of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) are concerned, Switzerland wishes once again to emphasize that we have little understanding for undifferentiated criticisms. The ODIHR is carrying out the mandate that was given to it by the participating States. The principles on which the observation of elections is based are listed in Ministerial Council Decision No. 19/06: independence, impartiality and professionalism. A discussion of methods is not ruled out, but it is also clear that debates of this kind must never lead to a limitation of the ODIHR's autonomy in assessing elections.

At this point, permit me to make reference to Switzerland's intervention with respect to the special subject "Democratic Elections and Election Monitoring" at the last Human

Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw. In that intervention we pointed out ways of integrating the subject of election monitoring as part of a rational discourse. Included here, among other things, is the proposal to conduct a systematic exchange of views regarding questions of methodology so as to enhance objectivity, transparency and professionalism in the observation of elections.

In conclusion, I should like to wish Ambassador Dolgov every success in his important work.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.