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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY RUDENKO,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 958th (SPECIAL) MEETING OF
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

2 July 2013

**In response to the addresses by Mr. Didier Burkhalter,
Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, and
Mr. Ivan Mrkić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia**

Mr. Chairperson,
Distinguished Ministers,

We welcome you to your first Permanent Council meeting and thank you for outlining the priorities of your chairmanships of the OSCE and presenting your Joint Work Plan for 2014–2015.

We agree with the intention of the Swiss and Serbian chairmanships to work on increasing the authority and relevance of the OSCE as a unique forum for dialogue and a fundamental element of an equal and indivisible security system stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok. We support the aim of acting in an unbiased and transparent manner and co-operating with all participating States in the solution of our joint tasks.

It goes without saying that the cross-cutting challenge for the two chairmanships will be the facilitation, or, to put it more precisely, leadership of collective efforts to move the Helsinki+40 process forward. In our view, its aim is to develop a “strategic vision” of a renewed OSCE in the twenty-first century and to determine the Organization’s role in achieving the Astana goal of creating a security community in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian region. One paramount task is translating into practical action the principle of indivisible security proclaimed within the OSCE and the implementation by all countries and groups of countries of the commitment not to strengthen their own security at the expense of that of others.

In searching for a solution to this, it is important to continue the proven practice of tapping into the potential of the so-called Track II initiatives. We trust there will be close co-operation with the network of academic institutions established at the recent OSCE Security Days with the aim of enriching the dialogue of the participating States with scientific analysis and fresh ideas.

Like air, the Organization needs a unifying agenda capable of strengthening the common space from Vancouver to Vladivostok in all three dimensions. We are impressed by the statement by the future chairmanships that collective efforts should be based on tasks and interests shared by all. This is the only genuine platform for joint work. It would enable life to be breathed into the OSCE and allow it to focus on today's real problems.

The modernization of the OSCE and its instruments to meet the needs of the times should be an important element of the Helsinki+40 process. This goal can be achieved only if the OSCE is transformed into a fully fledged international organization and a charter drawn up.

We note the stepping up in recent months of constructive discussions within the OSCE on conventional arms control in Europe and confidence- and security-building measures. Russia for its part has consistently advocated a reduction in the role of force in international affairs and the strengthening of strategic and regional stability. We are willing to participate in the drafting of appropriate agreements, including a new formula for resolving the conventional arms problem, on the basis of the principles of equality and genuine consideration of the security concerns of all OSCE States. We hope that at some stage our partners will develop a more realistic official position, rejecting stereotypes and preconditions, thus making it possible to move to a search for mutually acceptable solutions. The achievement of a common understanding on this issue would contribute significantly to the creation of a Euro-Atlantic security community.

We see added value in stepping up co-operation with the aim of increasing the OSCE's potential to respond to new transnational threats and challenges, including in the context of risks associated with the withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force from Afghanistan in 2014. The main efforts should be focused on increasing international and internal co-ordination within the OSCE in countering terrorism, illicit trafficking in narcotics and organized crime.

It is important to set the right direction for the OSCE's work on improving security, transparency and predictability, which is gathering pace, through the use of information and communication technologies, including the development of the appropriate confidence-building measures. The OSCE's work should complement but not replace the leading role of the United Nations in this area.

Objective reasons make it necessary to pay increased attention to the security risks caused by instability in the regions adjacent to the OSCE area. Here we are referring not only to Afghanistan, but also to the difficult processes in the Southern Mediterranean.

We support the aim of increasing the effectiveness of the OSCE's instruments at all stages of the conflict cycle, particularly of the mediation capacity. Conflict resolution work requires unremitting attention. But, as in medicine, the "do no harm" principle should be followed here. Conflicts should be resolved exclusively by peaceful means within the existing negotiation formats and respecting the interests of the parties.

In the economic and environmental dimension, it is important to focus efforts on the most acute problems, including the global financial and economic crisis and its consequences for the socio-economic rights of the population in the OSCE States. Once again, problems are coming to the fore that directly affect stability and security, such as the rise in

unemployment, particularly among young people, problems with the creation of new jobs, cuts in social security payments and the spread of poverty.

The OSCE's task of supporting the efforts of specialized international institutions in combating corruption is still relevant. We are impressed by the idea of paying more attention to the issue of emergency response to major natural disasters.

As regards work in the human dimension, we believe there are still a significant number of threats and challenges in the OSCE area that require increased attention from our Organization. They include combating manifestations of racism, xenophobia, aggressive nationalism and neo-Nazism, protecting the rights of children, ensuring non-interference in private life, and the alignment of human rights with the system of traditional moral and religious values. It is also important to maintain our focus on the defence of the rights of national minorities and the reduction of statelessness, the issue of freedom of movement, and the development of general rules for observing elections. Against such a challenging background, it is hardly reasonable to restrict our focus solely to strengthening co-operation with civil society. Nor can we agree with the ideas relating to strengthening the OSCE monitoring mechanisms. Instead, we propose that work continue on updating the current modalities of the OSCE's human dimension events, including the procedure for the participation of non-governmental organizations.

In conclusion, we should like once again to express our appreciation of the Joint Work Plan prepared by the two chairmanships. This "living document" contains many interesting proposals, including initiatives that have prompted us to ask questions and require further study.

Your Excellencies, we sincerely wish you and all our Swiss and Serbian colleagues success in carrying out the significant tasks facing the OSCE. The Russian delegation is willing to assist in every way possible.

Thank you for your attention.