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ADDRESS TO THE 17th OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

Julienne Hince, Chargé d' Affaires, Australian Embassy

2 December 2009

Australia is grateful to the OSCE Chairman, the Secretary-General, the participating states, and the Secretariat for their prompt consideration and approval of our formal application to become an Asian Partner for Cooperation.

Australia values the important contribution the OSCE makes to stability and security within and beyond Europe's borders. We share the commitment of OSCE members to the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the strengthening of fragile states. Like OSCE members, we believe that good international citizenship requires an active and positive contribution to international security.

Australia, for example, is currently engaged in Afghanistan (working alongside OSCE members) and actively contributes to world-wide efforts in combating terrorism.

Australia will bring to its engagement with the OSCE considerable experience in the work of peace keeping, peace building and the strengthening of governance in our own neighbourhood, as well as further afield in Afghanistan and Pakistan, among others. Australia's activities in our own region have given us experience in post-conflict management, capacity-building and institutional support – particularly in failed, or failing, states.

We have particular expertise in police education and training, community policing and administrative and structural reform.

Our continued participation in peacekeeping missions outside our immediate region demonstrates our commitment to international peace, security and stability.

Closer engagement with the OSCE will complement our existing contribution in these fields and facilitate the sharing of expertise and experiences. As an Asian Partner, Australia will therefore make an active and practical contribution to the OSCE's deliberations and activities.

We look forward to productive engagement with the OSCE in the months and years ahead.