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**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATIONS OF SWITZERLAND AND LIECHTENSTEIN AT
THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

15 January 2009

**In response to the opening statement by Mrs. Dora Bakoyannis,
Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE and Minister for
Foreign Affairs of Greece**

Madam Chairperson,

The changeover from the Finnish to the Greek Chairmanship and the tone set in the remarks made by Foreign Minister Bakoyannis concerning the programme for 2009 provide me with the opportunity to express a few basic thoughts regarding the OSCE, these thoughts while nothing new are, however, of importance to Switzerland and Liechtenstein today.

At the start of the new year, the OSCE is faced with two bitter facts. On the one hand, it was unable to prevent the unresolved conflict in the South Caucasus, one that for years had appeared to be “frozen”, from markedly deteriorating as a result of the outbreak of hostilities in August and the failure to extend the mandate of the Mission to Georgia in December. On the other hand, despite the excellent preparatory work by the Finnish Chairmanship it proved impossible to adopt a ministerial declaration in 2008; this would have expressed the will of all the participating States to commit themselves once more and completely to the “spirit of Helsinki”. Our Organization can make progress and be successful only if we constantly keep in mind our shared convictions and interests, exactly as our Greek Chairperson has done today and previously did at the end of the ministerial meeting in Helsinki.

Despite these problems, we can reaffirm the essential strengths of our Organization. These include the OSCE’s field operations as specifically mentioned by Minister Bakoyannis. Their presence on the ground makes it possible to carry out specific tasks involved in rebuilding and restoration, which is of course the best tool for creating stability and security and in this way for preventing conflicts. It is precisely for this reason that it is important that the OSCE continues to maintain a presence on the ground in the Georgian conflict area. We support all the efforts of the Greek Chairmanship to that end. Furthermore, we believe that it would be significantly easier for the field missions to carry out their tasks if the convention on the legal status of the OSCE, which is ready for signing, were to be adopted.

The European security that we so want and need must not only be co-operative and indivisible but also comprehensive and balanced. With this in mind, the OSCE’s security

concept is based on the three well-known dimensions, which complement and enrich one another.

The first dimension, that of politico-military security, is over the long term untenable without the human dimension. Mrs. Bakoyannis has reminded us that security begins with the inherent dignity of the human being. It is with this human dignity in mind that the OSCE's decentralized institutions for democracy and human rights, for national minorities and for freedom of opinion and freedom of the media have been gradually established. Switzerland and Liechtenstein believe it is important that these institutions should be able to carry out their tasks autonomously and within the terms of their mandate in the future as well.

Economic and environmental co-operation provides a link between the first and the second security dimension. By suggesting the subject area of migration, the Greek Chairmanship has provided the Economic and Environmental Forum in 2009 with a multidimensional and very rewarding topic for the year.

The OSCE represents a valuable tool for co-operative security within our Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian area. Any future discussion of matters concerning European security arrangements should therefore use the OSCE as a forum for dialogue and build on its multidimensional security concept. To this end, Switzerland and Liechtenstein would like to see greater co-ordination with other international organizations active in the area of human rights and human security. We support the efforts of the Greek Chairmanship to strengthen the OSCE in its important role, and we wish you personally Madam Foreign Minister every success in that endeavour.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.