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Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the OSCE

**STATEMENT BY MR. BORIS V. TIMOKHOV,
ACTING PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

10 February 2005

With regard to the settlement of the Northern Ireland question

Mr. Chairman,

The Russian Federation wishes to express its concern at the latest serious setback in the process of bringing about a settlement of the Northern Ireland question, a setback that arose following the statement by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) on 2 February of this year withdrawing its own proposals of 2004 regarding a cessation of “paramilitary” activities and the handing over of its weapons holdings to an international commission.

We believe that a viable solution to the Northern Ireland question must be found within the framework of the relevant 1998 agreements, to which we see no alternative. At the same time, however, we consider that this platform provides room for the involvement of other players, especially the OSCE, whose experience and capabilities in resolving conflict situations could be called on to a greater degree to help deal with the situation in Northern Ireland as well.

In that connection, we propose that an OSCE fact-finding mission should be sent to Northern Ireland for the purpose of conducting an in-depth study of all the circumstances surrounding the current exacerbation of this long-standing conflict and also of assessing the humanitarian aspects of the problem and the situation of the province’s peaceful population, considering the acts of terrorism and the instances of a disproportionate use of armed force by the army and the police that have occurred there. We would regard the work of such an OSCE mission as a kind of preparation for joint “brainstorming” between London and Dublin, the results of which could be used by the mediators involved in seeking a settlement to the Northern Ireland question as a basis for subsequent negotiation efforts.

We hope that London and Dublin will not reject the idea of the possible involvement of the OSCE in the Northern Ireland question and that they will properly perceive this initiative as a token of the readiness of the OSCE to help to promote genuine progress in this area.

The Organization's involvement in the Northern Ireland settlement process would also benefit the OSCE itself, which, as a pan-European organization, must not limit itself to conflict resolution in regions exclusively to the "east of Vienna".

In conclusion, we should like to emphasize that we have no desire whatsoever to politicize this problem. Our actions stem exclusively from our sincere desire to contribute to strengthening stability and security throughout the pan-European area.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.