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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANVAR AZIMOV,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

12 October 2010

**Concerning the registration of non-governmental organizations**

Mr. Chairperson,

I should like to draw attention to the delicate and, to put it bluntly, overdue question of the registration of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for OSCE events. We thank the Secretary General and also the Chairmanship for what was effectively the first attempt to establish an elementary procedure in this regard with the inauguration of a modality for NGO participation in the review conferences.

The events in Warsaw yet again highlighted a serious deficiency in the work of our Organization. In recent years a number of delegations have experienced difficulty with the practice that has imposed itself of effectively offering an open door to anyone who claims to be a representative of civil society. The provisions of the relevant consensus-based documents specifying exceptions to the rule, namely the 1991 Moscow Document, the 1992 Helsinki Document and Permanent Council resolution No. 476 of 2002, have not been taken into account.

Mr. Chairperson,

The development of civil society institutions is regarded by the President of Russia as (I quote) “one of the most important tasks that is and will be kept in sight” by the country’s leadership. The Law on the Procedure for Financing Non-Commercial Organizations and Utilizing Earmarked Capital is based on this and contains a clear mechanism for subsidizing NGOs dealing with problems of importance to society.

We have said on more than one occasion in this room that Russia supports the full and serious participation of representatives of civil society in OSCE events. The meetings are richer for their contribution and gain a positive dynamism. At the same time, we find it unacceptable to allow the participation of NGOs whose activities have been prohibited by the national courts on account of multiple violations of the law, in particular the Law on Combating Extremist Activities. I am sure that you have not forgotten the matter of the Russian-Chechen Friendship Society.

OSCE documents, notably the 1992 Helsinki Document, place clear restrictions on access to OSCE events by (I quote) “persons or organizations which resort to the use of violence or publicly condone terrorism or the use of violence”.

As this matter arose once again with regard to a number of NGOs at the Warsaw segment of the Review Conference, the time has come finally to clarify the question of registration once and for all. It is quite evident that the problem will not be settled of its own accord. It will continue to infect the work of the entire Organization and its conferences, turning this technical question into an acute political problem. As a result, instead of getting on with the preparations for the Summit, we all find ourselves drawn into an unnecessary polemic. And worst of all, this schism is taking place at a most inappropriate moment when we all need to work together more than ever to ensure the success of the Summit in Astana.

We cannot continue like this. Russia has long demanded that priority attention be devoted to this problem in the context of the reform of the OSCE. The food-for-thought paper presented by Russia and Belarus in the framework of the Corfu Process also deals with a resolution of this problem. We propose a clear and explicit procedure based on the experience of the United Nations and other international organizations. We urgently call on our colleagues to consider this problem within the relevant OSCE negotiation formats.

Thank you for your attention.