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**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF GERMANY AT THE MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

22 January 2009

Madam Chairperson,

Germany would like to inform the participating States of the OSCE that the Federal President of Germany, Mr. Horst Köhler, has ordered that the next elections to the German Bundestag (Federal Parliament) should take place on 27 September 2009.

Ambassador Lenarčič, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), was invited in a letter dated 9 January 2009 to observe the elections.

OSCE participating States that would like to observe these elections are also invited to do so. Any participating States interested in monitoring the elections should contact the German delegation.

In conclusion, I should like to refer to the following points.

Elections to the German Bundestag are a public affair. This means that everyone has access to the polling stations and can observe the entire voting procedure from the handing out of ballot papers to the counting of the votes and the establishment of the outcome. This right that applies to everyone also includes international and national observers, for whom the Federal Government has issued a standing invitation. No accreditation is necessary.