

CANADA - - Concluding Remarks (delivered by Ambassador Fredericka Gregory)  
OSCE Ministerial Council, Vilnius, December 7, 2011

Mr. Chairperson:

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird.

We warmly congratulate Lithuania for doing its utmost this year as Chair of the OSCE and underline the superb leadership and stewardship of our OSCE Council this year. Your efforts have allowed us to adopt some solid outcomes on:

- Partners for cooperation—in which we have committed to work with states in the Mediterranean and Asian regions to promote OSCE norms, principles and commitments ;
- Trafficking in Human Beings;
- Capabilities in enhancing the OSCE capacity to respond to conflict and crisis; and on Transnational Threats;
- Strengthening OSCE engagement with Afghanistan; and
- Equal opportunities for women in the economy.

However, Canada very much regrets that consensus was prevented on important issues of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

- As Minister Baird stated in the Plenary yesterday, Canada is keenly aware that anti-Semitism, discrimination and intolerance against Christians, Jews, Muslims and members of other religions still occur in the OSCE;
- And that people in the OSCE region can still be attacked and imprisoned simply because of their sexual orientation;

Canada is committed to supporting democratic reform and to responding to aspirations for freedom and empowerment, particularly for women and youth.

Canada continues to strongly support the aspirations of Mongolia to join the OSCE Community. We came to Vilnius ready to adopt a decision on this and remain of the view that Mongolia should become a participating state as soon as possible.

Canada is confident that the incoming Irish Chairmanship will do its utmost to move ahead on these vital issues.

We also look ahead to the Ukrainian OSCE Chairmanship in 2013 and expect that Ukraine will uphold the principles and integrity of this Organization. Respect for human rights and democracy, including a legitimate and active opposition, are core tenets of the OSCE.

In conclusion, we thank the Lithuanian Chair and his talented team for their hard work and determination in preserving the comprehensive approach to security that is the hallmark of the OSCE.

Thank you. Merci