

PC.DEL/360/10
6 May 2010

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

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

6 May 2010

**Regarding the report by the Head of the OSCE Mission to
Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome with pleasure Ambassador Harry Robbins and are grateful to him for his comprehensive report on the internal situation in the country and on the principal areas of activity of the Mission that he heads.

We are convinced that the primary task remains the ensuring of peaceful coexistence between ethnic groups on the basis of mutual respect, inter-confessional accord and tolerance in line with the Dayton principles. Assistance in matters concerned with judicial reform and with transformations in the area of policing and in the education system is a major factor in achieving this goal.

We take note of the positive results of the Mission's work in identifying and overcoming difficulties in the process of destroying existing surpluses of ammunition and small arms and light weapons. Arms control is a key element of security in the country and in the region. The efforts of the Department of Security Co-operation deserve high praise in this connection.

Thanks to the close co-ordination of the Mission's activities with the Bosnian authorities, for all practical purposes solutions have been found to the problems of the refugees and internally displaced persons and with regard to the restoration of their residential property rights regardless of where they were living after the war. We take the view that the successful Bosnian experience might be exploited in other countries of the region where OSCE field offices operate.

We support the work of the Mission in assisting the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina in conducting war crimes trials. In connection with the arrest of the former senior military leader Ejup Ganich, who stands accused of war crimes, we should like to recall that under the Dayton Agreement the Bosnian State authorities must fully ensure fair trials in all cases of war crimes and must not provide the defendants with all possible support.

We welcome the Mission's internal reorganization process and, in particular, the merging of the departments for democratization, human rights and education into a single human dimension programme. It is our hope that the next step will be to determine the most appropriate number of Mission field offices. For example, we have serious doubts as to the need to maintain the branch in Sarajevo two blocks away from the main office.

We should like to draw attention to the practice of preparing reports on the internal political situation in the country. We would urge the senior officials of the Mission to review the practice of selectively presenting information. The deliberate wrenching out of the overall context of events of isolated facts that refer to only one entity, a practice that in effect borders on favouritism, is creating an incomplete picture and as a result may have a negative impact on trust in the Mission's work in the information area. In our view, it is important to use the potential of the OSCE's presence in full accord with its existing mandate in order to provide genuine support for the multi-ethnic population of Bosnia and Herzegovina as they endeavour to solve the difficult tasks facing them, and not to waste energy on simple monitoring.

A balanced approach is particularly important in the run-up to the general elections scheduled in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the end of this year. We hope that particularly sensitive issues, such as constitutional reform, will be dealt with – as must be the case – by the Bosnians themselves on the basis of consensus and without any external pressure or the imposition of ready-made formulas. We would emphasize that the Mission, whose mandate is based on the Dayton Accords, must do all it can to assist the Bosnian parties in carrying out these reforms, and not allow itself to become sidetracked into levelling criticism whenever a convenient situation arises.

In conclusion, we should like to take note of the Bosnian peoples' considerable successes in establishing a mature and stable political system. There have in recent years been no repetitions of the "ministerial musical chairs" – the constant reshuffling of members of the Government and Presidium of Bosnia and Herzegovina – of the kind that we observed during the first ten years following the end of the conflict. The elections are in every respect being organized by the Bosnians themselves on the basis of laws adopted with the direct involvement of the OSCE. To a considerable degree the five conditions and two criteria under the "5+2" formula, necessary for transforming the Office of the High Representative into a Mission of the Special Representative of the European Union, have been met.

All of this attests to the maturity and functionality of the structures that are common to the State as a whole as well as the entity and local structures and serves as one more argument in favour of handing over to the Bosnian authorities the responsibility for the fate of their country. As long as an international protectorate continues to exist in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo's Euro-integrationist plans have no chance of success. We trust that the Mission will take this into account in its work.

Permit me to wish Ambassador Robbins and all of the Mission's staff every success in their work.

Thank you for your attention.