

Canadian Delegation to the  
Organization for Security & Cooperation  
in Europe



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Délégation du Canada auprès de  
l'Organisation pour la sécurité et la coopération  
en Europe

**DELEGATION OF CANADA TO THE OSCE  
STATEMENT BY YVES BEAULIEU, CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES  
IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORT BY THE  
DIRECTOR OF ODIHR, AMBASSADOR JANEZ LENARCIC  
755<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL  
19 MARCH 2009**

We warmly welcome Ambassador Lenarcic and thank him for his comprehensive report on ODIHR's recent and current activities. ODIHR delivers tangible benefits to populations in the OSCE region, thereby reaffirming the important and relevant role of the OSCE.

Ambassador Lenarcic has brought renewed energy, professionalism, integrity and vision to the work at ODIHR. Allow me to highlight a few aspects of his report, which are particularly important from Canada's perspective.

We recognize the tremendous efforts of Ambassador Lenarcic and his team in addressing hate crimes and manifestations of intolerance and discrimination. We also greatly appreciate the support that ODIHR has provided to the three newly appointed Personal Representatives of the Chairman in Office (CiO) on tolerance and non-discrimination.

ODIHR's excellence in the area of elections is widely recognized. Its methods and practices have been meticulously developed through its experiences in running election observation missions in more than two-thirds of the OSCE's participating States, including Canada.

We welcome Ambassador Lenarcic's efforts to consult with international actors involved in Afghanistan, and we encourage the OSCE to continue to support the elections process underway, with a view to promoting credible elections and helping to advance Afghanistan's capacity to hold elections in the future. Canada is taking a comprehensive approach to supporting the upcoming elections, through security, diplomatic and development efforts. We recently announced a contribution of up to \$35M over three years as part of the multi-donor effort to support Afghan-led elections, coordinated by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

Continuing on the issue of elections-related activities, it is important to underscore the valuable relationship between the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the ODIHR. As we

have said recently, it is imperative not to jeopardise the trust and credibility placed in OSCE election observation activities, as a result of destructive rivalries between the various complementary structures. A continued constructive attitude, openness to discussion and willingness to build on each other's value-added is essential to ensuring the maintenance of the high degree of credibility and public trust currently enjoyed by the OSCE and its Parliamentary Assembly.

We would like to commend ODIHR for its efforts in organizing Human Dimension events, which have fostered healthy debate among participating States and with civil society. To ensure that these events have maximum impact and utility, we, as participating States, must ensure the broadest participation possible of NGOs and civil society.

Regarding the human rights situation in the regions of Georgia affected by last summer's conflict, Canada firmly believes that the situations in South Ossetia and Abkhazia in particular should continue to be closely monitored by ODIHR. It is crucial that the international community continue to be involved in finding solutions to these issues. In particular, we note the ODIHR/HCNM intention to visit the region in the near future, and we hope that this will provide an opportunity to follow-up on the implementation of the recommendations of last year's report to the Ministerial Council. We of course would also welcome further discussions here in Vienna on the problems faced by IDPs and how the international community can address those challenges.

Madame Chairwoman,

Canada believes ODIHR is one of the OSCE's success stories. Ambassador Lenarcic, with the support of an outstanding team, has played a key role in making it so. We thank him and his team for their excellent work and wish them all the best in their future activities.

Thank you.