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Canadian Delegation to the
Organization for Security & Cooperation
in Europe



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

**DELEGATION OF CANADA TO THE OSCE
STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORT BY
AMBASSADOR VLADAMIR PRYAKHIN,
HEAD OF OSCE CENTRE IN DUSHANBE
714TH MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
29 MAY 2008**

Canada joins others in warmly welcoming Ambassador Pryakhin back to the Permanent Council. We thank him for his comprehensive report and presentation.

Our delegation believes the work of the Centre in Dushanbe over the past year has become increasingly focussed and prioritised resulting in greater mission effectiveness.

We note with satisfaction that in spite of a sometimes trying political, economic and social environment, the Centre continues to work in a balanced manner in all three dimensions, in consultation with the Government of Tajikistan.

Mr. Chairman, Canada would like to highlight the efforts undertaken by the Centre in assisting Tajikistan meet its human dimension commitments. To this end, we were pleased to read that the Centre is taking a leading role in promoting human rights and encouraging dialogue between government and civil society. Human rights issues, including unlawful arrests and ill-treatment by law enforcement, need to be addressed.

As noted in the report, the media situation in Tajikistan is difficult. In our view, the approach of working both with government officials to improve media legislation and with journalists to elevate professional standards is the right one.

We are similarly impressed with the strong programming dedicated to raising gender awareness and equality. Specific programming in this area is unique to the OSCE and we fully support this initiative.

However, absent from the report are activities focussed on election reform. We encourage the Centre to redouble its efforts on this programming.

Mr. Chairman, our delegation also appreciates the focus of the Centre in stamping out corruption, which continues to hamper democratic and social reform; in engaging civil society in the area of water management; and working with the government to improve legislation on the environment.

We would note that greater effort should be made in developing regional cooperation in water resource management.

Further, Canada is impressed with both the ambitiousness and the delivery of programmes in the first dimension. Efforts at reducing the risk of small arms and light weapons, conventional ammunition and landmines are commendable.

The Government of Canada is pleased to have contributed 3.1 million dollars to the Mine Action programme.

We also positively note the increased interest in border management and police reform. Canada highly values the contribution these initiatives could make to regional stability. We further stress the importance of engaging Afghanistan in these endeavours. Our delegation strongly supports the inclusion of Afghan programming and will work closely with the Centre, other OSCE executive structures and all delegations to ensure our efforts are effective and appropriate.

Mr. Chairman, we have just touched on a diverse and extensive range of activities that contribute enormously to the stability and security of Tajikistan and the entire region. These programmes are made possible by a flexible and comprehensive mandate that affords Tajikistan significant benefits.

We note with concern that discussions to extend the mandate are ongoing and the deadline for agreement is fast approaching. Canada urges the Government of Tajikistan to agree as quickly as possible to a comprehensive mandate that does not limit the capacity of the OSCE to continue its significant contributions to the country and region.

We wish Ambassador Pryakhin and his dedicated staff every success in the future.