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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

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE DELEGATIONS OF
CANADA, ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN, NORWAY AND SWITZERLAND,
IN RESPONSE TO HER EXCELLENCY BENITA FERRERO-WALDNER
EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS
AND EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY
699TH SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
31 JANUARY 2008**

The Delegations of Canada, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland welcome the European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Her Excellency Benita Ferrero-Waldner, back to the Permanent Council, and thank her for her address. Her long experience with, and deep attachment to, the OSCE is very clear to us all.

Our Delegations note with satisfaction the support and cooperation offered by the European Commission to the OSCE. We welcome deeper engagement and collaboration between our Organisation and the Commission on issues of joint concern.

We work with common cause and bring differing strengths to the challenges facing our region. Our relationship should be marked by complementarities, not competitiveness, over mandates.

Our Delegations share many of the priorities just outlined in the Commissioner's address. We note with concern the difficult conditions in Kosovo and fully support the continuation of an OSCE presence there, regardless of the outcome of ongoing discussions.

In addition, we are pleased that the Commission remains seized of issues in Afghanistan, with a focus on justice sector reform, borders and customs. In addition, we welcome news that EUPOL is scheduled to be fully operational in March 2008 and it is critical that this objective is met.

We are also pleased that the European Commission maintains a strong focus on Central Asia and, through its Neighbourhood Policy, remains engaged in work to resolve protracted conflicts in the OSCE region. We look forward to continued cooperation with the Commission to meet all of these challenges. We also welcome the EC's election observation mission in Pakistan.

In this regard, further to the remarks the Commissioner made today, we too would reiterate the value we place on ODIHR and, in particular, its election monitoring work. The activities undertaken by this Institution are pivotal to the security of all participating States of the OSCE.

Finally, Mr Chairman, we would be remiss not to stress the value our “Likeminded” Delegations place on the excellent cooperation we have always enjoyed with the EU at all levels, be it with the Council Presidency, the European Commission, or other EU institutions. We would particularly highlight our regular information and consultation meetings with the EU troika and the EU Commission representatives, excellently chaired by Portuguese Ambassador Ana Barata in the second half of 2007.

Canada, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland are pleased to continue these consultations with the current EU Presidency, Slovenian Ambassador Stanislav Rascan and the Commission’s representatives to the OSCE, in an effort to fulfill our shared priorities in 2008.

We again thank Commissioner Ferrero –Waldner for sharing her priorities with us today.