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**Chairmanship: Ireland****REPORT BY  
THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE CONTACT GROUP WITH THE OSCE  
ASIAN PARTNERS FOR CO-OPERATION TO THE NINETEENTH  
MEETING OF THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Dublin Ministerial Council meeting, 6 and 7 December 2012

The adoption in Vilnius in December 2011 of the three Ministerial Council decisions on the Partners for Co-operation, on strengthening OSCE engagement with Afghanistan, and on the application of Mongolia to become a participating State underscored the great importance placed on the OSCE Partnerships and gave fresh impetus to a further pursuit of the co-operation with the Partners.

The 2012 Lithuanian Chairmanship of the Asian Contact Group assisted the Irish OSCE Chairmanship in implementing those decisions, focused on continuing the OSCE's dialogue with its Asian Partners for Co-operation, on furthering practical co-operation and on exchanging views regarding the Eurasian, Euro-Atlantic and Asia-Pacific security architectures. The Asian Contact Group meetings continued to play an important role in facilitating the interaction between the OSCE and the Asian Partners. The six meetings of the Asian Contact Group in 2012 provided an opportunity to further the OSCE's dialogue with the Asian Partners.

At the first meeting of the Asian Contact Group, held on 20 January 2012, the Irish Chairmanship presented its priorities for the year and outlined planned activities that were of particular relevance to the Asian Partners. Participants shared their views on how to best implement the provisions of the Vilnius Ministerial Council decisions on Partners for Co-operation and on strengthening OSCE engagement with Afghanistan. The Ambassador of Mongolia, Dr. Jargalsaikhan Enkhsaikhan, made a presentation, highlighting areas where his country could work with the OSCE because the Organization's cross-dimensional approach fully echoed Mongolia's line on security. Regarding its application for participating State status, Ambassador Enkhsaikhan noted that that was in compliance with Mongolia's "third neighbour" policy in foreign relations.

During the second meeting, held on 2 March, a presentation was made by the Ambassador of Japan, Shigeo Iwatani, on the current security situation in the East Asia region, and the contribution of his country to Asian and European security, followed by a discussion on regional security and potential threats emanating from both natural disasters and politico-military tensions. The Group discussed the 2012 OSCE-Asian Conference, which had taken place on 13 and 14 February in Chiang Mai. The participants commended

Thailand for successfully hosting the event and discussed the outcomes of the Conference. The Secretariat updated the Group on the second package of projects related to Afghanistan and pointed out that funding was needed for the implementation of the projects.

The third meeting of the Contact Group, held on 27 April, focused on counter-narcotics activities and related regional co-operation. The Ambassador of Afghanistan, Abdul M. Shoogufan, made a presentation on counter-narcotics action and the importance of regional co-operation. He called attention to extensive regional co-operation initiatives that had been undertaken by Afghanistan, its neighbours and the international community. UNODC representative Ms. Smera Rehman, Associate Officer at the Regional Section for West and Central Asia, presented the UNODC regional programme for promoting counter-narcotics efforts in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries, which aimed at enhancing the counter-narcotics capacities across the Central Asian region.

At its fourth meeting, held on 29 June 2012, the Asian Contact Group welcomed the presentation by Ms. Paik Ji-ah, Director-General, International Organizations Bureau, Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, on multilateral security and co-operation in Northeast Asia, referring in particular to the Korea-Japan-China trilateral co-operation. Ambassador Çınar Aldemir, Executive Director of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), made a presentation on the new threats and challenges faced by Asian countries. The Group was also briefed by a representative of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre on the work of the Organization in Central Asia.

During the fifth meeting, held on 21 September, a thematic discussion on the activities of the OSCE and its Asian Partners for Co-operation aimed at combating trafficking in human beings took place, with expert presentations by Ms. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, and Ms. Francesca Friz-Prguda, Head of the UNHCR Liaison Office to the OSCE and Vienna-based UN Agencies. Mr. Vafa Ghazavi, representative of the Australian Delegation to the OSCE, presented an overview of the human trafficking issue in the region and the measures being taken by the Australian Government to tackle the phenomenon. All the speakers stressed the importance of co-ordinated national, regional and international efforts and the need to adopt a gender-sensitive approach.

With the adoption through a silence procedure on 21 November of the Ministerial Council decision on the accession of Mongolia to the OSCE, the promise of Vilnius was fulfilled, and Mongolia joined the Organization as the fifty-seventh participating State, in which capacity it continued to contribute to the objectives and activities of the Asian Contact Group.

During the sixth and last meeting of the Asian Contact Group in 2012, held on 23 November, the Ambassador of Thailand, Her Royal Highness Princess Bajrakitiyabha Mahidol, made a presentation on integrated global crime and justice policies for the rule of law and development. Dr. Frances Mautner-Markhof, Director of the Austrian Center for International Studies (ACIS), reported on the outcome of the ACIS seminar that had been held on 13 and 14 November 2012 on the process of regional security co-operation in Northeast Asia and the importance of the OSCE's experience. The meeting was also the first Contact Group meeting attended by Mongolia, not as a Partner for Co-operation but as the newest OSCE participating State, and Ambassador Jargalsaikhan Enkhsaikhan was warmly welcomed by the participants in his new role.

The annual joint meeting of the Asian and Mediterranean Contact Groups on 8 June focused on regional organizations as contributors to comprehensive security, with interventions by three speakers: Dr. Wolfgang Zellner, Head of the Centre for OSCE Research at the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy, University of Hamburg; Mr. Ettore Greco, Director of the Istituto Affari Internazionali (Italy); and Ambassador Marcel Peško, Director of the Office of the OSCE Secretary General. This meeting provided the opportunity for an update on recent developments and the progress achieved in making the OSCE Partnership more interactive and action-oriented, in implementation of the Vilnius Ministerial Council decisions on the Partners.

The 2012 OSCE-Thailand Conference on “Strengthening Security through Regional Co-operation: the OSCE Comprehensive Approach and Experiences of Asian Partners for Co-operation” was held in Chiang Mai on 13 and 14 February. The discussion focused on enhancing regional security through confidence- and security-building measures; promoting sustainable transport and energy security; and protecting and promoting human rights, democracy and the rule of law at the national and regional levels. The Conference was marked by open and frank discussions and active participation by representatives of the Asian Partners for Co-operation; OSCE participating States; other Asian States; international organizations in the region, including the Secretary-General of ASEAN; and academia.

During the Conference, a Workshop on Promoting Security through a Comprehensive Approach to Development in Border Areas – a Capacity-Building Programme According to Thai Experiences was launched for a group of Afghan experts. As a follow-up to the 2011 Workshop on “Combating Illicit Crop Cultivation and Enhancing Border Security and Management: Thailand as a Case Study”, the Workshop in 2012 afforded experts the possibility of exchanging best practices and benefiting from Thailand’s experience in addressing the threats deriving from illicit crop cultivation in border areas through projects supporting a human-centred, inclusive and sustainable development. This event provided opportunities for sharing the OSCE’s expertise on countering transnational threats, with a special focus on officials from Afghanistan and Central Asia, and on strengthening co-operation between the OSCE participating States and the Partners for Co-operation, and provided an excellent example of Partner-to-Partner co-operation under the auspices of the OSCE.

Throughout the year, the Chair of the OSCE Contact Group with the Asian Partners for Co-operation assisted the Irish OSCE Chairmanship in elaborating the second package of capacity-building and support projects addressed to our Partner for Co-operation Afghanistan. As a result, 9 out of 32 project ideas were prioritized, and sufficient support by the participating States was mobilized for three of the new projects to enter the implementation phase.

In the framework of the OSCE Partnership Fund, Afghan diplomats took part in the training programme “Afghanistan capacity-building: strengthening the diplomatic service”, held from 15 to 28 April 2012 in Ulaanbaatar. The aim of this event was to increase the capacity of young Afghan diplomats to address the multitude of regional issues facing their country and to enable them to benefit from the experience of Mongolia in democratic transition, while familiarizing them with the activities, values, and commitments of the OSCE. The participants were thus exposed to a wide range of topics relevant to their country, including the challenges faced by landlocked developing countries, approaches to combating

terrorism and extremism, as well as international law and the role of international organizations.

The Partnership Fund also made it possible to hold a high-level expert seminar on co-operation for security and development in Northeast Asia and the OSCE's experience, which was jointly organized by the Irish OSCE Chairmanship, the Austrian Centre for International Studies and the Lithuanian Chair of the OSCE Asian Contact Group on 13 and 14 November. The discussions focused on measures to advance the process of multilateral co-operation for security and development in Northeast Asia; the OSCE's experience relevant to multilateral security co-operation in Northeast Asia; confidence- and security-building measures for the prevention and reduction of risks and conflicts, and for the achievement of stability, security and co-operation in Northeast Asia; and means of furthering the peace process on the Korean peninsula.

The 2012 Lithuanian Chairmanship of the Asian Contact Group expresses its sincere gratitude to the Asian Partners for Co-operation, participating States and OSCE Secretariat for their unstinting support in making the OSCE Partnership a useful platform for an open dialogue and exchange of information, as well as in promoting a result-oriented co-operation and mutually enriching exchanges of experiences.