



EMBASSY OF SWEDEN

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**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE EU PRESIDENCY
BY MANNE WÄNGBORG, EMBASSY OF SWEDEN,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER (ISTC),
MOSCOW, 10 DECEMBER 2009**

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At this very moment, Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, is bustling with feverish preparations for one of the annual highlights of world science – the award ceremony of the Nobel prizes.

To generations of both natural and social scientists, as well as to ethically and politically concerned citizens in general, Alfred Nobel – on the one hand, the accomplished scientist, the successful businessman, the inventor of dynamite, on the other hand the peace activist, the promoter of arms control and non-proliferation long before those concepts had gained international currency – epitomizes the dualism of science: its unlimited potential for the good of mankind and, at the same time, the frightening risk of its awesome application for evil, threatening, even inhuman objectives, that is at the heart of ISTC activities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to have been invited to make a statement on behalf of the European Union on the occasion of the celebration of the fifteenth anniversary of the International Science and Technology Center (ISTC).

On this occasion, it makes sense to allow our thoughts to go back to the Cold War and to the volatile political situation in

European politics in the early post-Cold War period almost two decades ago.

It was precisely in that setting that the plans were developed to establish an international science centre in an effort to come to grips with some of the potentially destabilizing forces looming – or risking being unleashed – in the wake of the break-up of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty organization.

This was quite a farsighted concept, that enjoyed dedicated support of European leaders of the time. I am proud to be able to say that Sweden – at the time not yet a member of the European Union – expressed its immediate commitment to the establishment of the ISTC in early 1992 when the concept of this organization first evolved. Consequently, Sweden has been a member of the ISTC extended family from the very beginning.

The Center is one of few international organizations designed to promote international scientific cooperation with the objective of non-proliferation. The development of international trust and the mutual exchange of scientific information form integral parts of the work of the Center.

The EU takes an active interest in the results of the work of the Center. The Center's work fits well into the general framework of relations of the EU with the countries of the former Soviet Union. The promotion of scientific cooperation and innovation for peaceful purposes is among established EU objectives.

I am pleased that, under the Swedish EU Presidency, for instance, a high level delegation of the Russian Academy of Sciences visited Sweden. Likewise, the visit of a delegation of the Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Science to the Russian Federation was instrumental in building new bridges between the Russian and the Swedish scientific communities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Obviously, the times have changed since the ISTC was first born. In part, we now face different threats and challenges than 15 years ago. We look to science to provide new remedies, new technologies and new opportunities to resolve our common challenges, for example with respect to global warming, the development of alternative sources of energy and increased nuclear safety. The ISTC is playing a constructive role in bringing international expertise together to broker solutions to global problems.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On this occasion, I would like to congratulate all those who are or have been involved in the work of the Center. The EU looks forward to further discussing the future of the Center in the light of the importance that science has in ensuring global peace and security. Scientific work has to facilitate solutions to threats and dangers to international peace and security. The ISTC works for that purpose and that is why the EU Presidency supports it and values its work.

Thank you.