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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALYAKSANDR SYCHOV,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS
TO THE OSCE, AT THE MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

22 October 2009

**In response to the statement by Mr. Vygaudas Ušackas,
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania**

Madam Chairperson,

We warmly welcome Mr. Vygaudas Ušackas, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, to the meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council. We listened with interest to the Minister's comprehensive presentation and are ready to share a few thoughts on the issues he has touched upon.

The Republic of Belarus is paying considerable attention to the intensification of European regional and subregional co-operation, which not only helps to strengthen ties between States and increase the security and economic well-being of the participating States but also encourages the development of their human potential and the establishment of contacts between citizens. It is from this standpoint that we also view our co-operation with the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS).

As an integral part of the Baltic region, Belarus has been co-operating actively for quite some time with the countries of the region. In that connection, we believe it was entirely logical for Belarus to be granted observer status within the CBSS in June of this year. We should like to take this opportunity to thank all our partners once again, including our Lithuanian colleagues, who supported Belarus's application.

Belarus is ready for multifaceted and active collaboration with the Lithuanian CBSS Presidency in the priority areas identified by it, *inter alia* through the implementation of specific projects of mutual benefit. We can only welcome Lithuania's desire to remove visa-related and other barriers between all the countries of the region. The question of ensuring freedom of movement for our citizens is one of the priorities in Belarus's dialogue with its European partners.

Madam Chairperson,

On the whole, we share the view held by the Lithuanian Government regarding the importance of expanding co-operation between the OSCE and other regional and subregional organizations. We fully agree with Minister Ušackas's assertion that the OSCE represents a "natural platform for regional and subregional co-operation". In that context, we believe that more active use needs to be made of the Platform for Co-operative Security which we adopted at the Istanbul Summit in 1999, and that careful consideration should be given to this question within the framework of the Corfu Process. As we see it, we can all only profit from mutually beneficial co-operation and co-ordination of the activities of regional and subregional structures in the OSCE region.

We also agree that the OSCE is an important and unique forum for the discussion of European security issues. It is our hope that as part of the Corfu Process we shall be able to agree on measures that will make it possible to strengthen the observance of fundamental principles of international law and OSCE commitments, increase transparency and ensure equal guarantees of security. For us, the re-establishment of trust between participating States is one of the ultimate goals of our dialogue. Multifaceted and mutually respectful dialogue on the basis of trust must be one of the supporting foundations for the renewed security architecture in Europe, and we still need to give thought together to the place and role of the OSCE in that architecture.

In conclusion, allow me to mention briefly the issue of the Lithuania's forthcoming Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2011.

We note the serious preparations being made by Lithuania with a view to carrying out this extremely responsible and difficult task. We are confident that the versatile experience gained during work in the so-called Chairmanship Quintet and also during Lithuania's Chairmanship of the Permanent Council's Human Dimension Committee this year will be analysed and put to most effective use. We have drawn attention to Lithuania's interest in having a balanced agenda in the human dimension. We consider it extremely important that this approach be extended to the entire OSCE agenda. We are counting on the future Lithuanian Chairmanship to pay no less attention to the "first and second baskets". Increasing the effectiveness of the Organization must also be one of the priorities of any chairmanship. In that connection, we are ready to co-operate actively with our Lithuanian partners throughout the process of preparing for the Lithuanian Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2011.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.