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**PERMANENT MISSION OF ROMANIA
TO THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

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**Statement by Romania
in response to H.E. Mr. Vygaudas Ušackas,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, as delivered
by Ambassador Cornel Feruță to the OSCE Permanent Council
(22 October 2009)**

Thank you, Madame Chairperson,

I would like to join previous colleagues in welcoming Minister Vygaudas Ušackas in the Permanent Council of the OSCE and to thank him for sharing with us his ideas and vision, also in relation with the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

We fully concur with the emphasis Minister Ušackas placed on the importance of regional and sub-regional cooperation, which enhances the prospects of security, stability and prosperity in the entire OSCE space.

The co-operative approach of Lithuania at the helm of CBSS, in coordinating and deepening the ties with other relevant regional organizations, is very much appreciated by Romania, who is also a strong promoter of the virtues of regional cooperation.

Romania became recently an observer to the CBSS and in this context we would like to extend our thanks to the states within this cooperation format. We will play our part in an active manner.

As the topic of regional cooperation and dialogue is at the forefront of our agenda, as Minister Ušackas clearly pointed out in his intervention, allow me to briefly refer to some of Romanian demarches in terms of regional cooperation, in Central and Eastern Europe, with our Eastern partners, in the Danube basin and in the Black Sea area.

Speaking about relevant geopolitical areas in the Europe, I would like to focus particularly on the Black Sea region, where a more recent initiative – the Black Sea Synergy – needs special attention. The BSS involves partners from the Black Sea area and is endorsed by the European Union.

We perceive the Black Sea Synergy as a platform that would focus political attention at the regional level and invigorate ongoing cooperation processes, a flexible framework to ensure greater coherence and policy guidance. It strives to reinforce the impact of existing cooperation, as well as to enhance synergies with and build upon experiences of existing regional initiatives linking the Black Sea region to the EU, such as the Danube Cooperation Process.

One must acknowledge that there are still many obstacles affecting cooperation in the wider Black Sea region: historical disturbances and political sensibilities, different levels of economic development and competition for resources, transport infrastructure and language barriers. However, we know that the Black Sea is also an area with shared history and cultures, a common environmental future and similar socio-economic experience. We believe that now, more than ever before, solidarity, cooperation and mutually shared vision are needed.

There are significant opportunities and challenges in the Black Sea area that require coordinated action at the regional level. These include key sectors such as energy, transport, environment, movement of people and security. Given the confluence of cultures in the Black Sea area, growing regional cooperation could also have beneficial effects beyond the region itself.

Considering the success of regional cooperation in the Baltic area and Northern Europe, we also need to focus on exchanging of experiences between the regions, on common priorities, lessons learned, successful projects.

We strongly believe that the Black Sea has the potential to provide additional value to initiatives in areas of common interest and serve as a bridge to help strengthen relations with neighbouring regions - the Baltic Sea and the Nordic area, as well as South-Eastern Europe, the Caspian Sea or Central Asia.

We look forward to continue our strong cooperation with Lithuania and wish the Minister all the success as future OSCE Chair.

Thank you, Madame Chair.