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

14 January 2010

**In response to the address by Mr. Kanat Saudabayev,
Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE and Secretary of State and Minister for
Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan**

Mr. Chairman,

The delegation of the Republic of Belarus warmly welcomes Mr. Kanat Saudabayev, Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE and Secretary of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, to this meeting of the Permanent Council.

Belarus and Kazakhstan are united by many enduring historical, political, economic and cultural ties, and we were especially pleased when a few years ago the OSCE participating States unanimously supported the candidacy of our close partner for the post of Chairman-in-Office of our Organization. Minister Saudabayev, please accept our sincere congratulations as you commence this honourable and extremely responsible mission.

We listened with great interest to the video address by the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, and to your statement, Minister Saudabayev, setting out the priorities of the Kazakh Chairmanship. Permit me to make a few comments in that connection.

The Republic of Belarus shares Kazakhstan's vision of the tasks facing the OSCE at the present stage and the priorities for its activities in 2010.

We firmly believe that Kazakhstan's Chairmanship of the OSCE provides us all with a historic and unique chance to breathe fresh life into our Organization and to give it a "second wind". In this context President Nazarbayev's proposal that 1 August should be declared OSCE Day deserves support.

Unfortunately, in recent years the OSCE has found itself in a state of virtually permanent crisis owing to the disagreements between its participating States. In this connection, we fully support the assertion made in the President's video address to the effect that "expanding and strengthening the consensus base" must remain our key task within the OSCE.

The recent Ministerial Council meeting in Athens saw some positive progress in that direction. Serious dialogue has begun on the issue of strengthening European security within the framework of the Corfu Process, which will be continued in 2010. We believe that this process is capable of increasing trust among participating States and of making a significant contribution to the strengthening of the European security architecture, making it comprehensive and inclusive.

We support the intention of the Kazakh Chairmanship to pay appropriate attention to the Russian Federation's initiative calling for the drawing up of a legally binding Treaty on European Security. We regard this proposal as a concrete and logical way of overcoming the existing fragmentation of the security space within the OSCE region.

We trust that the Corfu Process will also help to increase the effectiveness of the OSCE, adapting its instruments and mechanisms to new threats and challenges.

We remain convinced of the need to adopt an OSCE Charter so as to enable us to complete the process of transforming the original Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe into a fully fledged international organization. In this context we welcome the appointment by the Kazakh Chairmanship of a special representative on the legal status of the OSCE and its plans to set up a working group to deal with this subject.

In view of the equal significance of all three security dimensions, we take a positive view of Kazakhstan's intention to draw an optimal balance between all three of these dimensions. We believe it is important to take further steps to rectify the functional and geographic imbalances in the work of the Organization, primarily by strengthening the economic and environmental dimension. In this connection, as the country chairing the Economic and Environmental Committee, our delegation intends to make a number of specific proposals with a view to strengthening the OSCE's activities in the "second basket".

Serious consideration is long overdue as to how to increase the effectiveness of the OSCE's activities in the humanitarian field. If the work by the Organization and its executive structures in the third dimension is balanced, focused on real threats and challenges and takes into account the interests of all participating States, it will help to strengthen confidence and security in the OSCE region. The task of optimizing the human dimension is very much part of the concept of dialogue within the Corfu Process.

We support the thematic priorities of the Kazakh Chairmanship identified by Mr. Saudabayev today.

In our opinion, the countering of such transnational threats and challenges as terrorism, organized crime, trafficking in human beings, drug trafficking and illegal migration must remain among the OSCE's key priorities for the future.

It is important to step up work to improve the existing tools available to the OSCE in the areas of confidence- and security-building measures, arms control, conflict prevention and resolution, and non-proliferation. We see it as one of our priorities to review and update the Vienna Document 1999 of the Negotiations on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures. We are looking forward to a more intensive negotiation process within the Joint Consultative Group with a view to finding a way out of the crisis surrounding the Treaty on

Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty). We are ready to co-operate with the Chairmanship in combating the illicit spread of small arms and light weapons, among other ways by carrying out in Belarus the relevant joint OSCE and United Nations Development Programme project.

We are also convinced of the need to step up joint efforts with respect to energy security. We are in favour of strengthening the role and practical activities of the OSCE in the protection of critical energy infrastructure, the use of alternative and renewable energy sources, increasing energy efficiency and the access of all countries to new energy technologies. The problems surrounding transport, which was identified by the Kazakh Chairmanship as the main theme for the OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum in 2010, has considerable importance for security and the development of our countries. We shall be delighted to hold the second preparatory conference for the Economic and Environmental Forum in Minsk this March.

Within the human dimension we welcome the increased attention on the part of the Kazakh Chairmanship to the issues of tolerance and non-discrimination. We are confident that Kazakhstan's positive experience in the establishment of inter-ethnic and inter-faith harmony will be exploited by its partners in the OSCE. For the Republic of Belarus one of the priorities in the "third basket" is, together with anti-trafficking, the question of freedom of movement. Despite quite a number of commitments in this field, barriers and dividing lines continue to exist today in the OSCE area in this connection. We firmly believe that there is a need to focus proper attention on the question of freedom of movement within the Organization's agenda for 2010. We are counting on the openness of our partners in discussing this matter. The issue of elections remains important, including work in this connection by the OSCE executive structures. We share the Chairmanship's view regarding the importance of objective and constructive election monitoring.

The logic of the development of processes within the OSCE in recent times gives rise to an objective need to convene a meeting at the highest level, of the kind that has not been held now for 10 years. In this context, we welcome and fully support President Nazarbayev's proposal that we should hold an OSCE summit in 2010. At the present time, there are enough meaningful concrete proposals on the negotiating table that could provide worthy substance for a summit. All that is needed is the political will to begin a substantive discussion. The Corfu Process provides us with such an opportunity. We urge all our partners in the Organization to do everything necessary to prepare for a successful and productive summit meeting. We also support the idea of holding an informal ministerial meeting this summer in Almaty to adopt specific decisions on a summit agenda.

In conclusion, we should like to confirm once again Belarus's readiness to engage in the closest co-operation with the Kazakh Chairmanship this year, and we wish Kazakhstan and you personally, Minister Saudabayev, every success in the important task of chairing the OSCE.

Our delegation would also like to express its particular gratitude to Greece for its successful Chairmanship in 2009.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.