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Delegation of Belarus

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

11 January 2007

Mr. Chairman,

The delegation of the Republic of Belarus warmly welcomes the participation of Spain's distinguished Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos Cuyaubé, in this meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council.

We have listened with keen interest to his account of the Spanish Chairmanship's main priorities for the year to come. On the whole we support the approaches taken by Spain and regard them as a good basis for imparting fresh momentum to the OSCE as a forum for dialogue and co-operation.

At the same time I should like to comment on a number of issues which we regard as particularly important for the future work of the Organization.

First, let us talk about the implementation of the decisions adopted in Brussels on strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE. These decisions were taken as an answer to justified criticism by some countries of what they regard as outmoded methods of work and double approaches that have shown themselves to be untenable.

We are prepared for constructive collaboration with the Chairmanship and our partners in the OSCE on further reform of the structures and institutions of the Organization and ways of achieving greater transparency in its work. We expect the establishment of the three committees to be of help in improving the consultation process, particularly as regards the aim of ensuring full participation of small delegations in the work of the OSCE.

We also wish the Spanish Chairmanship every success in the forthcoming efforts to put the work of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in connection with elections on a sounder basis. It is essential in this context that account should be taken of the approaches and proposals suggested by all participating States without exception.

As regards the activities of the OSCE missions, we continue to believe that priority should be accorded to those tasks and projects which are proposed by the host States themselves. Moreover, the project activity itself should serve as the main criterion for evaluating the effectiveness of OSCE field missions.

Secondly, we consider it particularly important that the Organization should continue to enhance its efforts to achieve an appropriate balance among activities in the three dimensions of security.

In this context we welcome Spain's proposals regarding the agenda for the Fifteenth OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. Environmental problems have, for a long time now, deserved an appropriate place on the OSCE's agenda as one of the most important factors underpinning stability and security. At the same time we consider it important to ensure a certain continuity and focus, in the Organization's work, on questions of transport and migration. Nor do we exclude the possibility of considering certain aspects of energy security among the issues dealt with by the OSCE.

The fight against terrorism has become firmly entrenched on the OSCE's agenda and indeed has become one of the fastest growing issues considered by the Organization. At a time when not a single State is safe from the threat of terror, the OSCE should seek the most productive and practical ways of collaborating with its participating States in this sphere.

In this context our delegation welcomes the decision of the OSCE Permanent Council on the work programme for 2007 on preventing and combating terrorism. This document gives us a clear picture of the main directions to be taken by the counter-terrorism work of the OSCE in the period before us.

We feel that greater attention should be devoted in 2007 to the campaign against trafficking in human beings. Once again we should like to draw the attention of delegations, of the Secretariat and of the OSCE Special Representative on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings to a resolution adopted in December 2006 by the General Assembly of the United Nations entitled "Improving the co-ordination of efforts against trafficking in persons". This document was in fact initiated by the Republic of Belarus and received consensual support from the Member States of the United Nations. We are convinced that the OSCE can make an important contribution to the forthcoming work on the establishment of a global partnership against slavery and trafficking in human beings in the twenty-first century.

Now a third complex of problems — those associated with the human dimension. We welcome the emphasis laid by the Chairmanship on matters of tolerance and non-discrimination. We are in agreement, moreover, with the need for more active involvement of the OSCE in United Nations efforts under the "Alliance of Civilizations" initiative.

In this context we want to express our gratitude to the Spanish delegation for holding preliminary expert consultations on the problems of the human dimension in December 2006 — consultations which made evident the main priorities of the Chairmanship in the humanitarian sphere. Our delegation is prepared for a free-ranging discussion of these questions with a view to seeking and agreeing on mutually acceptable subjects and time frames for events in the human dimension in 2007.

And then there is the politico-military dimension, which remains one of the most important areas for co-operation within our Organization. At the same time, co-ordination of the work done by the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) leaves a lot to be desired. We must do some intensive work to improve the effectiveness of

collaboration between these two consultative bodies of the OSCE, particularly with regard to matters that require joint action. We want to express our confidence that in the course of the Spanish Chairmanship we will succeed in putting the collaboration of the FSC and the Permanent Council on a qualitatively new level.

The Belarusian delegation is grateful for the active participation of Spanish experts in working out a project plan to improve the security of stockpiles of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in the Republic of Belarus and also for the provision of financial assistance by Spain for the initial stage of this project. We hope that Spain will show similar resolve and determination with regard to the problems of SALW during its term as Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE.

A few final words, then. Historians ascribe to the “Iron Chancellor” Bismarck a statement to the effect that the most important occupation of diplomats is to forecast what is going to happen in five years’ time, and then, after the lapse of that period, to explain in an intelligible way why it did not happen. These words come to mind at a time when we are reflecting on the future of our Organization. At all events, we should not like, after the passage of a few years, to be focusing our attention on missed opportunities.

In conclusion, Mr. Minister, let me express to you and your delegation in Vienna every success in carrying out the numerous and highly ambitious tasks which await the Spanish Chairmanship in the OSCE this year. In your work you can, of course, rely fully on the support of the delegation of Belarus.

We should also like to express our gratitude to the Belgian Chairmanship for the work done in the year 2006.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.