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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE HOLY SEE
TO THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY
AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

**STATEMENT BY MONSIGNOR MICHAEL W. BANACH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HOLY SEE,
AT THE 790th (SPECIAL) MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

19 JANUARY 2010

**RE: ADDRESS OF THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND CO-OPERATION OF SPAIN,
H.E. MR. MIGUEL ANGEL MORRATINOS**

Mister Chair:

The Delegation of the Holy See joins previous speakers in welcoming to the Permanent Council His Excellency Mr. Miguel Angel Morratinos, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation of Spain, and thanks him for presenting the priorities of his country's rotating European Union Presidency for the current semester.

Minister Morratinos called attention to the efforts his country will make in implementing the Lisbon Treaty. Now that the Lisbon Treaty has taken effect, Europe has entered a new phase in its process of integration, a process which the Holy See will continue to follow with close attention. My Delegation notes with satisfaction that the Treaty provides for the European Union to maintain an "*open, transparent and regular*" dialogue with the Churches (Art. 17). As Pope Benedict XVI said during his Apostolic Visit last September to the Czech Republic, Europe has an irreplaceable role to play "for the formation of the conscience of each generation and the promotion of a basic ethical consensus that serves every person who calls this continent 'home' " (*Meeting with Political and Civil Authorities and with the Diplomatic Corps*, 26 September 2009). Churches have a positive contribution to offer; the community of believers can and wants to take part in this, but, for it to do so, its public role must be recognized. In this regard, on the occasion of his *2010 Address to the Members of the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to the Holy See*, Pope Benedict XVI said: "Sadly, in certain countries, mainly in the West, one increasingly encounters in political and cultural circles, as well in

the media, scarce respect and at times hostility, if not scorn, directed towards religion and towards Christianity in particular.... But such an approach creates confrontation and division.... There is thus an urgent need to delineate a positive and open secularity which, grounded in the just autonomy of the temporal order and the spiritual order, can foster healthy cooperation and a spirit of shared responsibility” (11 January 2010).

In offering a *recorrido de horizonte* of the Spanish EU Presidency priorities, Minister Morratinos also noted that many of them coincide with OSCE commitments. There are challenges in all three OSCE dimensions: politico-military challenges, those faced in conflict resolution; challenges in the economic and environmental dimension and those related to the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms. In order for the OSCE to respond effectively to them, it will be necessary to respect OSCE commitments. Undue expansion of mandated OSCE commitments risks a diminished effort in responding to the challenges that participating States and OSCE institutions have agreed to address in a unified way.

In noting Minister Morratinos’ comments on the Alliance of Civilizations (AoC), the Holy See is of the opinion that any possible relations between the OSCE and the AoC should take place within the framework agreed upon at the Ministerial Council in Helsinki: an eventual co-operation in specific projects, in areas of common interest and mutual benefit, to be undertaken, preferably, in an informal way.

In conclusion, Mister Chair, I would like to offer all the best to Minister Morratinos in carrying out his duties and to assure both him and the Delegation of Spain at the OSCE of the Holy See’s willingness to engage in dialogue on matters of mutual concern in the service of all believers and citizens.

Thank you, Mister Chair!