

Statement
by His Excellency Mr. Sergei Martynov
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus
at the OSCE Ministerial Council
(Madrid, 29-30 November 2007)

Dear Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished Colleagues,

The Republic of Belarus is interested not only in preserving but also in strengthening the OSCE, a unique forum for a broad political dialogue based on the principle of sovereign equality of all the participating States.

We stand for the OSCE being transformed into a fully fledged international organization, which goals and objectives should be reflected in its basic document – the OSCE Charter. The speedy elaboration and adoption of the Charter is the central element of improving the work of our Organization, which will allow making its activities more systematic and transparent.

To our regret, the process of a comprehensive reform of the OSCE and its adapting to modern realities is currently stuck. A number of key Brussels decisions have not been fulfilled.

I would like to stress that the lack of coordinated action to strengthen the OSCE effectiveness can result in further aggravation of the crisis tendencies in our Organization.

We continue to be concerned with the so-called “autonomy” in the work of certain OSCE executive structures, which is encouraged by some of our partners. Such an “independent” activity is counterproductive and fraught with most serious consequences for the future of our Organization. The OSCE institutions and field operations are the instruments of assistance that must implement efficiently the goals and mandates assigned to them by the participating States.

The Republic of Belarus has serious reasons for complaint with regard, in particular, to the activities of the OSCE ODIHR which ignores the instructions given by the participating States as to improve its election observation practices, and which still takes deliberate approach in implementing its mandate.

However, the problem here lies not only and not just with the Office. The main problem is the persistent unwillingness of some of our partners to establish common rules and clear principles of the OSCE election observation activities. Together with a number of other participating States we propose that such principles be adopted at the Madrid Ministerial Council or concrete work on them started in the Permanent Council without further delay.

We all should understand that the absence of common, universal, transparent and clear rules of observation causes serious damage to the idea of international election monitoring, which is right and useful in its essence.

Last year saw the deepening of the crisis with the CFE Treaty. The process of ratification of the Adapted CFE Treaty has got nowhere, which undermines the very foundations of the arms control regime in Europe. As a result one of the participants has been made suspend the implementation of the Treaty. The decision to temporary apply the Adapted CFE Treaty before it officially comes into force could possibly be the way out of this critical situation.

A visible imbalance among the OSCE's three baskets is still there, while the work in human dimension is often based on the principles far from an equal and mutually respectful dialogue.

Moreover some participating States impose measures of economic and other pressure, which is a severe violation of the basic principles of the OSCE and is inadmissible in terms of generally recognized norms of international law. As H.E. Mr. Moratinos has rightly noted, it is only through the dialogue and interaction that we can solve problems.

Mr. Chairman,

For the OSCE to be really relevant it is necessary that its activities be focused on tackling the problems vital for the security of all participating States.

In our view, combating new threats and challenges – that is terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking, human trafficking, illegal migration – should be a priority direction. We support development of the dialogue on environmental and energy security within the OSCE.

As a specific input into the OSCE efforts and into this Ministerial, Belarus suggested adopting a decision on protecting critical energy infrastructure from terrorist attack in the OSCE area. This issue rests on the junction of the challenges mentioned and in future is one of the key elements of security of our states.

We welcome the fact that many speakers today stressed the importance of the fight against human trafficking. Within the UN framework the Republic of Belarus initiated creating a Global Partnership against slavery and trafficking in human beings in the XXI century. We fully support the OSCE activities in countering human trafficking as well as intensification of its interaction with other international actors in this sphere.

Mr. Chairman,

Strategic vision of purpose and the feeling of common responsibility are necessary for strengthening our common security and enhancing the level of stability in the OSCE area. It is important to overcome the lack of confidence within the OSCE. There is no alternative to a mutually respectful dialogue and cooperation.

We believe that the decision on the OSCE Chairmanship of Kazakhstan will be an important step really indicating the equal status of all the participating States and contributing to strengthening of the confidence within our Organization and the OSCE itself.

In conclusion let me express thanks to Spain for their contribution into the Organization's activities as the Chairmanship and for the preparation of this meeting.

As well we would like to wish Finland a successful work as the Chair in 2008.

Thank you for your attention.