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**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS AT THE  
SECOND REVIEW CONFERENCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
THE TREATY ON OPEN SKIES**

Vienna, 7 June 2010

Madam Chairperson,

Allow me on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Belarus to welcome all the participants in the Second Review Conference on the Implementation of the Treaty on Open Skies. We are confident that under your leadership the Conference will be able to conduct a comprehensive and impartial review of the functioning of the Treaty and outline the path for its further implementation.

The Republic of Belarus regards the Treaty on Open Skies as one of the most important and effective politico-military instruments in the OSCE area aimed at strengthening confidence and increasing transparency among the States Parties. The Treaty, which was drafted and signed in the first years after the end of the Cold War, continues to be an integral component of the pan-European security system.

The Treaty's control and verification mechanisms have played an important role in maintaining the regime of arms control and confidence- and security-building measures in the OSCE region at a time of continuing crisis concerning the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and the uncertainty that existed until recently with respect to the Vienna Document 1999. In this connection, I should like to emphasize in particular that the success in the implementation of the Treaty on Open Skies has been possible thanks to the collective efforts of all the States Parties.

There is no doubt that the Treaty on Open Skies will also retain its significance and usefulness in the future as a unique measure of confidence and transparency and will be able to fit seamlessly into the updated pan-European security architecture. The almost 700 observation flights conducted over the eight years of the Treaty's implementation are a real confirmation of the effectiveness and viability of the Treaty in the changing politico-military situation in the Euro-Atlantic area. The Open Skies Consultative Commission (OSCC) and its informal working bodies, within which decisions to develop and supplement the provisions of the Treaty have been drafted and adopted, have played and continue to play an important role in ensuring the uninterrupted functioning of the Treaty on Open Skies.

Madam Chairperson,

The Republic of Belarus welcomes the accession to the Treaty of new States and is in favour of the further expansion of the “club” of States Parties, which will, undoubtedly, help to increase transparency and further strengthen security and stability in its area of application.

Despite the fact that the Republic of Belarus does not have its own observation aircraft and Open Skies airfields, it is meeting its commitments under the Treaty on Open Skies responsibly and in full. Belarus is making its contribution to the effective implementation of the Treaty on Open Skies within the Belarus-Russia group of States Parties, formed in accordance with Article III, Section II, paragraph 3, of the Treaty. There is close co-operation with the Russian Federation on matters concerning Treaty implementation, which is regulated by a number of intergovernmental agreements. The Belarusian-Russian Intergovernmental Open Skies Commission has been in operation since 1995 and has proved to be an effective instrument for resolving issues of practical co-operation between the two countries within the group of States Parties.

During the five-year period that has elapsed, the Republic of Belarus and Russian Federation group of States Parties has accepted 158 observation flights from other States Parties to the Treaty, 31 of which were carried out over the territory of the Republic of Belarus. Around 190 observation flights have been conducted over the territory of other States Parties to the Treaty, including 20 flights carried out with the involvement of Belarusian flight representatives. About 330 transit flights by observation aircraft have been carried out over Belarusian territory within the framework of the Treaty.

As a member of a group of States Parties to the Treaty on Open Skies, we have gained interesting experience in Treaty implementation, which, as we see it, could be useful for other States with limited possibilities for carrying out observation flights.

Madam Chairperson,

The Republic of Belarus is ready for a constructive discussion of all the items on the Conference’s agenda, including new ways of implementing the Treaty on Open Skies and using the possibilities of the Treaty to counter new threats and challenges to security.

We are convinced that the Treaty on Open Skies will continue to make a substantial contribution to increasing openness and strengthening confidence, security and stability in the area from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

In conclusion, allow me to wish all the Conference participants every success in their work.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I would ask that this statement be attached to the journal of the Conference.