

Statement
by His Excellency Mr. Sergei Martynov
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus
at the OSCE Ministerial Council
(Brussels, 4-5 December 2006)

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished colleagues,

First of all, in my capacity of the Chairman of the Council of Foreign Ministers of Collective Security Treaty Organization I would like to draw attention to the Address of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, distributed among the participating States. This document reflects our fundamental approaches to the activities of the OSCE and its reform.

In the national capacity I want to underline that today we are in a position to comment, quite carefully, only on preliminary results of the work to reform the OSCE.

We are grateful to the Belgian Chairmanship for their efforts on this issue. We have moved from the “dead stop” and initiated the process of the reform. An open and substantial dialogue on the Ljubljana “road map” took place. As a result, we found a lot of interesting decisions.

It is extremely important to continue such a dialogue. There is no other way to make our Organization truly strong and effective.

Now on those problems, which, in our view, haven't yet received adequate solutions.

First. On the activities of certain institutions of our Organization and their so-called “autonomy”. First of all, it concerns the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

Today the ODIHR deliberately ignores the principle of accountability to the participating States. It often creates a feeling of a sheer “world behind the looking-glass”: as if the Office is not tasked to assist us, but as if we should blindly and unconditionally fulfill its every instruction.

We have serious claims to the ODIHR's election observation activities. The clarifications presented in the ODIHR Report only increase our conviction in the necessity to introduce substantial adjustments to the Office's work.

As a country, currently presiding at the CSTO I would like to draw your attention to the draft decision with concrete suggestions put forward today by the

delegations of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The methodology of election observation should be transparent, understandable, and approved by the participating States. The criteria for election assessment should be developed on the basis of comparative analysis of electoral legislation and practices of all participating States. Only then will the election assessments be impartial. Only then will the ODIHR activities bring real benefit to all participating States.

Otherwise there may come a moment when one would have to closely consider the relevance of certain commitments of participating States, related to interaction with this OSCE institution and, accordingly, the issue of financing ODIHR activities from the OSCE budget. We do not intend to pay for a “product”, which can not be used.

Further serious efforts to reform the OSCE are required.

Second. On the activities of the OSCE field presences. The missions can not and should not be forever. It is essential to timely adapt their activities to the needs in the field and to plan the gradual completion of their activities.

Third. Despite the fact that we managed to agree on a number of ministerial decisions within the "first basket" of the OSCE, total lack of progress in developing and renovating its politico-military tools represents a very serious challenge to the Organization's activities. This threatening tendency has been prevailing in the Forum for Security Cooperation over the recent years, which eventually may lead to the loss of this unique negotiating body of the OSCE.

We are alarmed by further delay in the entry into force of the adapted CFE Treaty. It threatens the very existence of the Treaty and is fraught with yet larger menace - the disintegration of the balanced system of the European security.

Next year it is important to give new impetus to our collective efforts to combat trafficking in human beings. We welcome enhancing OSCE role in this sphere. We expect that the Resolution on "Improving the coordination of efforts against trafficking in persons", initiated by Belarus and approved by the UN General Assembly will be taken into consideration by our Organization.

Naturally, the structural reform is not a panacea for solving all problems, existing in the framework of the OSCE. Common purpose, proclaimed in the Report of Eminent Persons, is only being declared by words of mouth and is not being implemented in practice.

Much to our regret, we don't see qualitative changes in the political dialogue. The OSCE's current practice to conceal serious human rights violations in the states “west of Vienna” and simultaneous “protrusion” and artificial politicizing of events in other participating States is a vicious one.

It is absolutely unacceptable, when some of our partners, contrary to the OSCE basic principles, introduce sanctions and restrictions of different kind with

respect to other participating States. These actions create real obstacles to the full-fledged participation of all states in the activities of the Organization.

We need an organization founded on the equitable cooperation and identical character of commitments for participating States. We should proceed from the principle of solidarity and mutual aid, but not the one of confrontation and isolation. Time is ripe for altering the very philosophy of cooperation and dialogue in the framework of the OSCE.

The issue of Chairmanship of the Organization is an important integral part of the reform. In this regard we support Kazakhstan's bid for the OSCE Chairmanship in 2009.

In conclusion allow me to express gratitude to Belgium for its contribution to the activities of the Organization in the capacity of Chairman-in-Office and for the preparation of this meeting.

We would also like to wish Spain successful work as the OSCE Chairman-in-Office in 2007.

Thank you for your attention.