

EF.DEL/35/05
24 May 2005

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Belarus to the OSCE

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR ALYAKSANDR SYCHEV,
HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS,
AT THE THIRTEENTH MEETING OF THE OSCE
ECONOMIC FORUM**

Prague, 23 May 2005

Opening Plenary Session

Mr. Chairman,

The Republic of Belarus traditionally attributes great significance to the economic and environmental dimension of the OSCE as a most important, integral part of our activities aimed at maintaining security and promoting co-operation.

Stable economic growth and sustainable development, including environmental security, condition, to a great extent, the ability of our States to deal effectively with contemporary threats and challenges.

In this connection, the adoption in Maastricht in 2003 of the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension was of great significance.

In our view, additional efforts by the participating States and the OSCE structures are needed at this stage to ensure the successful and comprehensive implementation of the Strategy Document. In this regard, of particular importance will be the implementation by the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, and by the Organization's field missions, of the necessary project activities, for which additional financial and human resources must be made available.

Mr. Chairman,

We note the importance of the Economic Forum, and we hope that its functioning and preparation will be improved in the future in order to enhance the effectiveness and usefulness of the dialogue taking place in the Forum, in line with the decision adopted at the last meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council in Sofia. On this point, we are expecting important results from the work of the informal "group of friends" of the Chair which is responsible for considering ways of strengthening the OSCE economic and environmental dimension and preparing the corresponding report.

Mr. Chairman,

Demographic trends, migration and the integration of national minorities are undoubtedly very important factors, the neglect of which may have catastrophic consequences.

Today's meeting provides a good opportunity to exchange experience and ideas regarding "best practices" in these areas, to co-ordinate our joint activities and to attempt to define the specific role of the OSCE in dealing with the issues involved. In this connection, we are grateful to all today's keynote speakers, who have provided a stimulus for our discussions.

The delegation of Belarus is ready to discuss the steps being taken by Belarus in the areas of demography, migration and the integration of national minorities, as well as the difficulties encountered by it.

We attach special importance to questions of migration, and our delegation is hoping, in this context, for a serious and comprehensive discussion of the whole complex of questions relating to migration at this meeting of the Forum.

During the preparatory seminars in Trieste, Almaty and Kiev, a number of interesting recommendations and ideas were put forward which could be converted into practical measures. We hope for a fruitful discussion of these ideas in the Forum, leading to concrete results.

We attach importance to the conduct this year of a review of the implementation of commitments in regard to integration, trade and transport, for the first time in an expanded format.

In this connection, we also support the proposal of Belgium regarding the themes for the next Forum, since the subject of transport is many-sided as well as being of key importance for economic development and security.

In conclusion, we should like to thank the Slovenian Chairmanship, the OSCE Secretariat and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic for their efforts in making the preparations for this meeting.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.