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Delegation of Belarus

**STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT DELEGATION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF BELARUS TO THE OSCE AT THE 980th (SPECIAL)
MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

16 January 2014

**In response to the address by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and
President of the Swiss Confederation, Mr. Didier Burkhalter**

Mr. Chairperson,

The delegation of Belarus joins in welcoming Mr. Didier Burkhalter, Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE and President of the Swiss Confederation. We congratulate our Swiss colleagues on the start of their responsible and important task of chairing the OSCE.

We welcome the pragmatic approach of the Chairmanship and its adherence to the evolutionary process aimed at developing a positive dynamism in the work of the OSCE based on co-operation, confidence and consensus.

Many of the priorities presented by the Swiss Chairmanship coincide with our vision of what it is important to focus on in the OSCE's work in 2014.

In the first dimension we welcome the intention of Switzerland to work on the updating of the Vienna Document together with the chairpersons of the Forum for Security Co-operation. We are looking forward to the development of dialogue within the OSCE on the role and future of the conventional arms control in Europe, particularly in the context of the elaboration of the Helsinki+40 Roadmap. Belarus is willing to play an active part in this work.

Combating transnational threats and challenges to security is without a doubt one of the key aspects of the OSCE's work. There is a need to intensify efforts in this area, particularly regarding the implementation of the corresponding declaration at the Kyiv Ministerial Council. With account taken of the adoption on the margins of the ministerial meeting of an initial set of confidence-building measures for cyberspace, we should consider developing co-operation between the OSCE and the United Nations in this area.

We believe that it is important to further expand efforts in the economic and environmental dimension, which is undeservedly far from being at the top of the OSCE agenda, despite the fact that socio-economic development, energy security and environmental

protection directly affect the quality of life and well-being of every person. Additional efforts by the OSCE in these areas could and should make a real practical contribution to the sustainable development and stability of our countries. We support the proposal by the Swiss Chairmanship of focusing at the Economic and Environmental Forum on preventing environmental threats to security. Belarus is willing to participate actively in this work, particularly through the provision of its expertise.

The potential of the second basket as a platform for dialogue could be more actively exploited as a way of developing and strengthening collaboration between different integration communities and processes in the OSCE area.

With a view to making progress in the human dimension, it is important to focus this year on issues with a “common denominator”, which would be of interest to all participating States. It is gratifying to note that the Swiss Chairmanship intends to devote serious attention to combating trafficking in human beings. Other unifying issues worth considering in our opinion include guaranteeing freedom of movement, human rights education, protection of the rights of children and strengthening traditional family values. There is also a need to continue discussion of election observation. We assume that these and other aspects will be given balanced consideration in the work of the Human Dimension Committee and in the schedule of the annual OSCE events in the third basket.

The Helsinki+40 Roadmap is contingent on stepping up efforts by participating States on a wide range of issues, particularly with regard to improving the effectiveness and viability of the OSCE. This is impossible in practice, however, without comprehensive reform of the Organization, the adoption of its charter, optimization of the human dimension and improvement of the modalities for holding corresponding OSCE meetings.

Mr. Chairperson,

Impartiality, balance and a willingness to understand and take into account the positions of all participating States are the keys to the success of any Chairmanship. We are confident that Switzerland, as one of the initiators of the Helsinki process, has all of the qualities necessary to effectively perform its functions as Chairmanship of the OSCE. We wish you, Mr. President, and your team in Bern and Vienna every success in carrying out this important and honourable mission.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.