

Delegation of Belarus

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR ALYAKSANDR SYCHOV,
HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS,
AT THE OSCE ANNUAL SECURITY REVIEW CONFERENCE**

19 June 2007

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Belarus to welcome all the participants in the OSCE Annual Security Review Conference. As a forum for co-operation and dialogue on the basis of equal rights for 56 countries, this Conference represents a unique opportunity for a discussion of all aspects of security within the framework of the OSCE. In this regard, the main aim of this event as we see it is to examine and evaluate the effectiveness of the OSCE's work to combat threats and challenges to security on the European continent.

At the present time, the combating of new threats, frequently of a transborder and global nature, is taking on ever greater political importance. This trend is in line with current realities and confirms the ability of the OSCE to adapt its agenda to the most pressing security problems.

In this regard, it is no accident that the fight against terrorism, organized crime, the drugs threat and trafficking in human beings constitutes a dynamically developing area of the OSCE's work. The Republic of Belarus actively supports the further development of co-operation in these areas within the framework of the OSCE and wishes to make its own contribution to the countering of new threats at an international level.

Belarus is party to all the international counter-terrorism instruments that have been adopted by the United Nations and is in favour of prompt ratification of these documents by those countries that have not yet done so.

We advocate a more active involvement of the OSCE in efforts to combat trafficking in narcotic drugs. We hope that the OSCE Expert Conference on Fighting the Threat of Illicit Drugs, to be held in Vienna next week, will highlight areas in which the OSCE can make a contribution to this work without duplicating the efforts of other international organizations.

The fight against trafficking in human beings remains one of the priority areas of international co-operation for the Republic of Belarus. We have on a number of occasions drawn the attention of the participating States to the Belarusian initiative regarding a global partnership against slavery and trafficking in human beings in the twenty-first century. We trust that the work to implement the relevant resolution of the 61st Session of the United

Nations General Assembly, including the activities of an interdepartmental working group established under the aegis of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, will be successful and yield practical benefits. We also urge the OSCE to play an active part in the work of this international mechanism.

It is worth giving thought to the elaboration of new instruments that should effectively counter existing threats and challenges while reflecting the multidimensionality of security and the comprehensive nature of our Organization. In particular, this concerns the security of critical infrastructure, including nuclear power plants, strategic energy facilities and pan-European transport corridors. These questions are extremely relevant in the context of combating terrorism.

It is also worth remembering that strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE remains one of the key tasks facing the participating States. It is precisely the results of this work that will determine how useful the OSCE is for all its participating States and hence the political future of the Organization, including its ability to play a truly important role in the modern-day European security architecture.

The analysis we have conducted of the situation regarding implementation of the decisions on strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE shows that the process of reforming the OSCE is not yet complete and that additional serious efforts are required in this area. We are in favour of preserving and strengthening the OSCE as a unique political forum for dialogue on the basis of equal rights. However, if we are to extricate the OSCE from its crisis we need systematic efforts to reform the Organization and its institutions and field missions. An important goal remains the transformation of the OSCE into a fully fledged international organization with its own charter and the rejection of politically motivated assessments and biased approaches in the work of some of its institutions. Only in this way will the Organization become a genuinely democratic instrument for strengthening confidence and ensuring comprehensive security and stability in the region.

We have on a number of occasions emphasized that effective countering of threats and challenges in the OSCE area is possible only through co-operation among all elements of the European security architecture without exception, including the politico-military component, which represents one of the most important elements of this architecture. Unfortunately, we still find ourselves compelled to note the existence of a serious imbalance in the work of the Organization, which directly affects the OSCE's first basket.

Arms control and confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) have played a most important role in the development of relations between OSCE participating States in the area of security and remain one of the crucial elements for the future functioning of the Organization as an integral link in the entire system of ensuring stability in Europe. Unfortunately, the results of the recent Extraordinary Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe suggest that some participating States are not interested in restoring the relevance and viability of this unique European arms control mechanism. The potential of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation is also not being used to the full. In our view, there has long been a need for collective thought to be given to possible ways of developing and modernizing pan-European arms control and CSBM regimes and seeking possible ways of adapting them to the changing politico-military situation in the OSCE area.

We hope that during this Conference participating States will be able to identify concrete measures to help resolve existing differences of opinion so that the OSCE can respond with greater effectiveness to threats to security and stability in the area extending from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

In conclusion, I should like to draw attention to the fact that, in accordance with Permanent Council Decision No. 795 of 17 May this year concerning the agenda and organizational modalities for the 2007 Annual Security Review Conference, keynote speakers were required to submit the texts of their statements by 24 May 2007. We trust that during the preparations for future conferences we will have an opportunity to familiarize ourselves with statements prior to the start of the event.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.