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**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR GENEVIÈVE RENAUX,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF BELGIUM
TO THE OSCE, AT THE MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

8 March 2012

**Belgium assumes the Chairmanship of the Task Force for International
Co-operation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research**

Mr. Chairperson,

This Tuesday Belgium assumed the Chairmanship of the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research for one year. The ceremony handing over the Chairmanship from the Netherlands to Belgium took place at the Belgian Embassy in Berlin, where the secretariat of the Task Force is located.

On the initiative of the Prime Minister of Sweden, three governments decided in 1998 to set up a working group to preserve the memory of the Holocaust, particularly among the most recent generations. This working group grew quickly and was transformed into a task force following the Stockholm International Forum, a conference on Holocaust education, remembrance and research in 2000. Today it consists of 31 countries, 29 of which are OSCE participating States and one a Partner for Co-operation. A number of international organizations also have observer status in the Task Force, including the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

The Belgian Chairmanship will strive to implement an action plan lasting several years and consisting of four priority topics:

- The killing sites, i.e., sites where mass executions took place and where the victims are buried;
- Access to archives;
- Scientific research regarding Holocaust education;
- The organization of commemoration days.

Our Chairmanship year will be marked by a series of meetings and events, for example, the “Train of 1,000”, which will take schoolchildren and students to Auschwitz at the start of May. This is an initiative under the patronage of His Majesty King Albert II.

We shall make use the proximity of the European institutions in Brussels to establish close working co-operation with the European Union in order to create synergies.

We shall also continue and intensify the excellent co-operation established with a number of international and intergovernmental organizations, in particular with the ODIHR.

Thank you for your attention.