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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALYAKSANDR SYCHOV,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS
TO THE OSCE, AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE
PERMANENT COUNCIL**

4 June 2009

**In response to the report by the OSCE Secretary General on co-operation
with the Alliance of Civilizations**

Madam Chairperson,

We listened with interest to the report presented by Mr. Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, Secretary General of the OSCE, on prospects for the development of co-operation with the Alliance of Civilizations and we should like to make a few brief comments.

The Republic of Belarus joined the Group of Friends of the Alliance this year and took part in the second forum, which was held in Istanbul recently. Under this initiative, Belarus is ready to make its contribution towards strengthening mutual understanding and co-operation among nations and peoples and among cultures and religions as well as towards jointly countering the forces that preach radicalization and extremism.

In the international arena Belarus is an active supporter of the development of dialogue between civilizations, dialogue based on the right of all peoples to freely determine their political, economic, social and cultural development and on the principles of diversity in the progressive development of States. This is the thinking behind our work in the United Nations and other international organizations, including the OSCE. We take the same view of the Alliance of Civilizations initiative, the aims and objectives of which we fully share.

As regards the specific modalities for the OSCE's co-operation with the Alliance, here we share the Secretary General's view that in order to take this further, we need a clear mandate which has the consensus of all the participating States, drawn up after a careful review within the relevant OSCE consultative bodies of all aspects of the co-operation with the Alliance, including the possible activities of the OSCE executive structures and the formalization of relations between the Alliance and the OSCE. It is important that any decision reflects the essence of the strategic objective of the Alliance – the strengthening of global understanding. It is also vital that this work takes account of existing OSCE mandates.

In this context, we feel that it would be useful to invite Mr. Jorge Sampaio, High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, to a meeting of the Permanent Council, and believe that a presentation by the High Representative would be conducive to a productive discussion on this matter within the OSCE.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.