

PC.DEL/88/08
4 February 2008

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of Belarus

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

31 January 2008

Mr. Chairman,

The delegation of Belarus welcomes Mrs. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, European Commissioner for External Affairs and European Neighbourhood Policy, to this special meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council.

Our position on the issues brought up in the European Commissioner's statement are well known to the participating States. I should like to take this opportunity to inform the Permanent Council briefly about the development of relations between the Republic of Belarus and the European Union (EU).

We are interested in normalizing relations with the EU and are taking specific steps to this end.

Belarus attaches particular importance to the fact that a representative office of the European Commission will open soon in Minsk. The domestic procedures in connection with the final arrangements in this matter are in their closing stage. We regard the opening of the office of the European Commission as a major step towards consolidating our relations with the EU. In our opinion this step should help to establish real dialogue between Belarus and the European Commission and ensure more effective co-operation, particularly in areas of common interest.

Mr. Chairman,

The year 2007 was not marked by any breakthrough in the relations between Belarus and the EU. For the time being they are evolving quite slowly. We hope that this year our co-operation will gain a steady positive momentum.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.