

PC.DEL/433/09
10 June 2009

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of Belarus

**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 statement by Mr. Samuel Žbogar,
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovenia and Chairman of the
Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe**

Madam Chairperson,

On behalf of the delegation of Belarus, I should like to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovenia, Mr. Samuel Žbogar, to this meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council. We would like to thank him for his comprehensive account of the priorities of the Slovenian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

We support further development of the co-operation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe on the basis of their Declaration on Co-operation of 2005. We support well-balanced work in all four areas of co-operation, the areas of particular interest to us being combating the trafficking of human beings and combating terrorism.

As the agendas of the two organizations coincide in many respects, it is important to continue with activities aimed at preventing duplication and achieving optimal effectiveness.

Madam Chairperson,

Regarding the relationship between the Council of Europe and Belarus mentioned by Mr. Žbogar in his presentation, we are committed to developing a constructive dialogue with the Council of Europe.

We welcome the Council's renewed interest, in both the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly, in strengthening co-operation with our country, a positive trend we hope to see translated into concrete initiatives on co-operation with Belarus prepared and implemented by the Council of Europe, including invitations to Belarus to accede to a number of Council of Europe legal instruments in the field of criminal law.

The development of our relationship is sure to be significantly stimulated by the work of the Information Office of the Council of Europe in Minsk, which will be officially opened in a few days' time on 8 June.

Opening an Information Office of the Council of Europe in a country which is not yet a member in the 60th anniversary year of the organization is a rather symbolic and special event. It is a clear political indication of the openness of Belarus towards the Council of Europe. We share the view of Minister Žbogar that the Information Office could become an effective platform for the joint implementation of initiatives and projects beneficial to both partners.

We shall be glad to welcome you to Minsk, Minister, for the opening ceremony of the Information Office. We are sure that your forthcoming visit will allow us to discuss prospects at a high level, and to set the priorities for future co-operation between Belarus and the Council of Europe.

In conclusion, allow us to wish Slovenia every success in carrying out its complex but worthy mission in chairing the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.