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

19 January 2010

**In response to the statement by Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos,
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation of Spain**

Mr. Chairman,

We should like to welcome Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos, President of the Council of the European Union and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation of Spain, to this meeting of the Permanent Council. We are most pleased to see you again, Minister Moratinos, in this hall, where the significant contribution made by the Spanish Chairmanship and by you personally to the work of the OSCE in 2007 is well remembered and valued. We listened with interest to your comprehensive and informative statement. Allow me in that connection to express a few thoughts on behalf of the delegation of Belarus.

The European Union is undoubtedly an important partner for the OSCE in many spheres of its work, primarily in ensuring security and stability in our Organization's area of responsibility.

Of particular importance here is the EU's contribution to the dialogue, which has now entered its active phase within the OSCE, on the future of European security – the so-called Corfu Process. The ultimate goal of this process is, in our view, to search together for ways of overcoming the existing fragmentation of the security space from Vancouver to Vladivostok and of adapting the European security architecture to the present-day realities and the challenges of the future.

The unequivocal decision by the EU countries to conduct this dialogue within the forum provided by the OSCE is evidence that the potential of our common Organization is taken seriously, and that there is a readiness to build a European security system that takes into account the views of all its members. In that connection we are counting on the European Union to display an engaged and constructive attitude towards the discussion of the Russian proposal to draw up a Treaty on European Security.

We also hope that the Corfu Process will make it possible to enhance the effectiveness and raise the level of the OSCE's interaction with the European Union and other key

international organizations concerned with security in the Euro-Atlantic region. We see here great potential for co-operation both in the co-ordination of activities and in the implementation of specific joint projects. The idea of convening in 2010 a meeting at the level of senior officials of the OSCE, the European Union and other international organizations involved in the security area is more relevant than ever.

Mr. Chairman,

Belarus is counting on active co-operation with the Spanish Presidency of the European Union in all areas of mutual interest, primarily within the framework of the EU Eastern Partnership initiative. It is our hope that this positive and ambitious project will remain on the agenda of the Spanish Presidency, and that this year the Partnership will fully get under way.

Since the very outset, the Republic of Belarus has welcomed the Eastern Partnership initiative and its inclusive and pragmatic character. It is precisely for this reason that Belarus has played an active part in the conceptual elaboration of the Partnership, the preparations for the Prague summit meeting and the work of all its platforms.

We firmly believe that the Eastern Partnership can succeed only if its activities are carried out in full accord with the basic principles of the Declaration of the 2009 Prague Summit. On this point we think it fundamentally important to preserve in spirit and letter the equal standing of all the components of the Eastern Partnership, *inter alia* with respect to the parliamentary dimension.

We should also like to make separate mention of another important topic both in the context of the Eastern Partnership and within the OSCE. In spite of a rather large number of mutual commitments undertaken by the OSCE participating States with regard to freedom of movement, today there continue to exist throughout Europe barriers and dividing lines impeding such movement. The overly bureaucratic and at times offensive procedures for obtaining visas and their excessive cost represent a serious barrier to freedom of movement and contacts between the citizens of our countries – contacts that like nothing else help to increase mutual understanding. We are convinced of the need to see to it that on its agenda for 2010 the OSCE gives proper attention to freedom of movement and the liberalization of visa regimes. We are counting on our partners, first and foremost the European Union, to show a readiness to discuss this problem.

In conclusion, allow me to wish Spain and you personally, Minister Moratinos, every success in the office of President of the European Union.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.