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**PERMANENT MISSION
OF TURKEY TO THE OSCE**

ENGLISH only

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR YUSUF BULUÇ,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY,
AT THE 680TH MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
ON 20 SEPTEMBER 2007**

I would like to bring to the attention of the Permanent Council a development which, in our view, seriously undermines our common efforts in combating terrorism and prevention of its financing through organized crime.

We have learned with regret that the legal case, which was referred to the Belgian judiciary in 2001 following the “Sputnik Operation” initiated by the Belgian authorities in 1996, concerning laundering of money gained through drug and arms smuggling by the PKK/KONGRA-GEL terrorist organization using MED TV, acting as its front organ, has been dropped due to the statutory limit. This outcome has been rendered all the more unacceptable as the probability of its occurring had been drawn, in good time, to the attention of the Belgian authorities.

The effectiveness of a justice system becomes questionable if the process is delayed to a point where the result is impunity.

I do not think that Belgium requires neither this event nor my present intervention to be reminded of the commitments that bind us in our fight against terrorism. Suffice it to underline that this incident runs counter to the decisions taken and statements made in the framework of the OSCE, including those adopted under the Belgian Chairmanship, which together set out a panoply of commitments and obligations which participating States solemnly undertake.

Moreover, this incident represents a case which exposes once again and irrefutably the close link between terrorism and organized crime.

My authorities will continue their contacts with their Belgian counterparts with a view to exploring prospects for an appeal of the case and seek to monitor progress towards that end, as actions by the Belgian authorities will demonstrate their readiness to rectify this situation in observance of their commitments.

The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has publicly expressed its views on this matter through a press statement issued on 8 September 2007.

The fact that I had intervened earlier at the Permanent Council on account of an incident also falling into the domain of our collective fight against terrorism must illustrate how seriously we regard this matter.