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**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ALSO ON BEHALF OF ARMENIA,
BELARUS, KAZAKHSTAN, KYRGYZSTAN AND TAJIKISTAN AT
THE CLOSING SESSION OF THE SEVENTEENTH MEETING OF
THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Athens, 2 December 2009

The delegations of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan, which co-authored the draft Ministerial Council decision on freedom of movement, regret that that document was not supported by a number of participating States. This happened despite the fact that the draft was submitted in good time and the wishes of the delegations involved in the drafting work were taken into account in the text of the document.

Freedom of movement is one of the most important fundamental human rights and freedoms. Commitments regarding freedom of movement are set out in the Helsinki Final Act (1975), the Vienna Document (1989), the Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE (1990), the Charter of Paris for a New Europe (1990), the Budapest Document (1994) and the OSCE Border Security and Management Concept (2005).

We advocate the full implementation by all the OSCE participating States of the commitments in this sphere, including the commitment to liberalize visa regimes.

We urge our partners to engage in a broad-based dialogue within the OSCE on this subject in 2010, including within the Corfu Process, with a view to achieving concrete results for the benefit of the citizens of all participating States.

I would ask that this statement be attached to the journal of the Ministerial Council meeting.