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**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR VIKTAR GAISENAK,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS,
AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

Vienna, 13 January 2005

**In response to the statement by the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE,
Mr. Dimitrij Rupel**

Mr Chairman,

The delegation of the Republic of Belarus would like to welcome the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE to the meeting of the Permanent Council and thank him for presenting the chairmanship's programme of work. The implementation of the priorities highlighted by the Chairman-in-Office will undoubtedly help to strengthen stability and security in the OSCE area.

We trust that the Slovenian chairmanship will follow the principle of continuity in its work and are confident that it will do so, and that it will do all it can to implement the important decisions of principle we adopted earlier. The OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century occupies a special place among these decisions. In that connection, we welcome in particular the intention of the chairmanship to step up efforts to counter terrorism.

In its work, the OSCE advocates the principle of a comprehensive approach to ensuring security. Today however, as was noted in the Moscow Declaration by the member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States of 3 July 2004 regarding the state of affairs within the OSCE, "There is a serious imbalance between the three security dimensions — the politico-military, economic and environmental, and human dimensions". That is why we must improve the balance between these three security dimensions and develop a dialogue on all aspects of security. This dialogue should focus on developing mutually beneficial co-operation on the basis of equal rights, on preventing the emergence of new dividing lines in the OSCE area and on preserving the unity of participating States with regard to the values and principles of the Organization.

We note the need to especially strengthen the economic and environmental dimension of the OSCE by implementing the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension and by carrying out specific projects, such as the OSCE Conference on Energy Security.

We trust that the chairmanship and the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation will continue to work together closely this year. In that connection, we are counting on the co-operation and assistance of the Slovenian chairmanship in the efforts to strengthen the OSCE's politico-military dimension during our chairmanship of the Forum. We also hope that the chairmanship will help us to find solutions to the problems associated with Belarus's requests for assistance in improving the safe storage of its arms and ammunition and in destroying its surpluses.

With regard to the humanitarian work of our Organization, a fair amount of attention is being given to issues surrounding the holding of democratic elections. We must finally put an end to the practice of the arbitrary and unsystematic assessment of election results by election observation missions of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and increase the confidence of participating States in the activities of such missions. As we have already said on more than one occasion, without conducting a comparative analysis of the election laws and practices of all OSCE participating States, without drawing up objective criteria for assessing elections and without reviewing the working practices adopted by ODIHR missions, this will be impossible. We hope that the chairmanship will understand this position and take appropriate steps.

No less important is the question of the further adaptation and improvement of the activities of various agencies and instruments of the OSCE, including its field missions. Belarus is convinced of the need to carry out an "inventory" of OSCE missions, during which concrete answers must be provided to the following questions: Under what conditions should this Organization establish a mission, if at all? How much does the work of missions cost the OSCE and to what extent does the effectiveness of these missions correspond to the amount of budgetary resources being spent on them?

Within the context of reforming the OSCE, of principal importance for us all will be the work of the Panel of Eminent Persons and also the holding of high-level consultations at the OSCE. We hope that as a result of these consultations innovative approaches and recommendations will be formulated, which will make it possible to define the role and place of the OSCE in the evolving European security structure and also to enhance considerably the effectiveness of our Organization, to overcome the division that exists within it and to increase the confidence of participating States in the OSCE. We must give back to the OSCE its once leading role in preventive diplomacy, the settlement of crisis situations and the resolution of so-called "frozen conflicts". We need to devise mechanisms appropriate to today's global realities, which can respond effectively and without delay to the new threats and challenges to our common and indivisible security.

In conclusion, allow me to wish you, Mr Minister, and your team in Vienna every success in carrying out the difficult tasks facing the chairmanship this year.