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**Représentation Permanente de la Belgique
auprès de l'OSCE**

- Annual Security Review Conference of 31 August – 1 September 2021-

**Intervention by Ambassador Nagant de Deuxchaisnes
Special Session: the Structured Dialogue**

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.

Dear excellencies, dear colleagues, Belgium is pleased to address the Structured Dialogue during today's Special Session of the Annual Security Review Conference. We thank the Swedish Chairpersonship for facilitating this discussion, which enables us to position the Structured Dialogue process in the context of the overall OSCE security agenda.

We would also like to express our gratitude to the Spanish Chair of the Informal Working Group, Ambassador Cuesta and his team for their hard work and capable leadership both this and last year. Guided by the motto 'Understanding for Security', the participating States were able to address key politico-military issues of security and current and future challenges to security challenges to the OSCE area. We particularly valued the discussions on climate change and security, and encourage to keep this important topic on the agenda of the OSCE, also in the politico-military dimension.

For Belgium, the Structured Dialogue remains a valuable platform to discuss the politico-military issues as well as to exchange views on security threats, including new strategic challenges. It is not a dialogue for the sake of dialogue but rather a confidence building measure in itself.

The mandate of the Structured Dialogue, as formulated in the Hamburg Declaration, is substantial and future oriented. We need to be mindful of the security environment the OSCE States currently find themselves in: violations of international law and breaches of OSCE principles and commitments continue to occur and the global pandemic that hit us in 2020 has not been eradicated yet. In this context, trust and mutual confidence are of utmost importance and should be restored, especially since most verifications have come to a standstill, resulting in lower transparency, and dialogue has often been reduced to virtual formats. As an organization, we should draw lessons from the situation we find ourselves in. Therefore, we believe that a meeting as we are attending today, is an excellent way to exchange best practices in order to learn from each other and be prepared for new crises that may come our way.

For Belgium, we believe that continuity, strong leadership and predictability are key in times of crisis. Any response to tackle future incidents, should be coordinated and mindful of the potential consequences 'temporary measures' might have. We would also encourage the development of a script or business continuity plan with different phases and specific measures related to access of personnel, decision making processes and means of communication. Regarding the latter, we acknowledge that technology has served as an opportunity and a challenge throughout the covid-19 crisis. We commend to OSCE for not wasting a crisis and reacting swiftly to the changed normality. Both in terms of

communication and information-sharing, we have entered the digital age when our traditional tools were under constraint. It is up to all of us now, to foster this momentum and agree on ways how we can build on the opportunities and curb the challenges.

It is with this in mind that we need to keep pace with the changing environment we are in and modernize our existing toolbox. Crucial steps to achieve this are in general the continued development of the Conventional Arms Control instruments as well as the Confidence and Security Building Measures and more in particular the modernization of the Vienna Document.

To conclude, Mr. Chairperson, Belgium thanks you again for raising this important topic during this edition of the ASRC and looks forward to remain actively engaged in the Structured Dialogue .