

Delegation of Belarus

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR ALYAKSANDR SYCHOV,  
HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS,  
AT THE OSCE ANNUAL SECURITY REVIEW CONFERENCE**

1 July 2008

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Belarus to welcome all the participants in the Annual Security Review Conference, which serves as a unique platform for dialogue on all the aspects of security in the OSCE area without exception.

Our Organization constantly focuses its attention on reviewing the current European security situation and on considering the issues involved in implementing OSCE decisions and commitments in this area and in enhancing the effectiveness of the way in which they are carried out. These questions have lost none of their relevance, especially in view of the fact that the number of threats and challenges to security in the OSCE area has not diminished. The globalization of modern-day risks not linked to a specific military threat and frequently of a diffuse nature poses a serious challenge to the OSCE by calling into question the ability of the Organization to adapt its agenda to the current situation so as to respond with maximum effectiveness to urgent security problems.

For the OSCE to be genuinely valid and effective, it must focus its activities on solving those problems that are of defining importance for the security of all participating States.

One such priority area is the fight against new threats and challenges — terrorism, organized crime, trafficking in narcotic drugs and human beings, and illegal migration. We are pleased to note that the OSCE has achieved considerable successes in this area.

As a specific contribution to the Organization's efforts in combating terrorism, the Republic of Belarus initiated the drafting and adoption at the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Madrid in November 2007 of a decision on the protection of most vital energy infrastructure facilities against terrorist attacks. This issue is involved in a whole host of new threats and challenges and constitutes one of the key elements of security in our countries. In that connection, we welcome the plans to convene an expert meeting on this subject on 17 July 2008 in Vienna and trust that that event will mark the start of a substantive dialogue in this area.

One of the main spheres of international co-operation is the fight against trafficking in human beings. Within the United Nations the Republic of Belarus authored the initiatives

calling for a global partnership against slavery and trafficking in human beings in the twenty-first century and the adoption of a United Nations strategy on countering trafficking. We believe that the OSCE has sufficient potential and added value to enable it to play a role in these global initiatives. For our part, we are ready to provide the necessary assistance to the Organization and also to share with participating States our experience in countering this challenge to security. We are also in favour of more intense interaction between the OSCE and other international agencies involved in combating trafficking.

Mr. Chairman,

The actions our Organization is taking to counter new threats and challenges must not be seen as a reason for complacency. We are faced with crisis manifestations having to do with the incomplete status of the process for comprehensively reforming the OSCE and adapting it to present-day realities, and with the evident imbalance between the three principal spheres of international co-operation.

In order to extricate the OSCE from this crisis situation, what is needed is precisely targeted work to reform the Organization, its institutions and its field operations. We favour turning the OSCE into a fully fledged international organization whose tasks and goals must be reflected in its fundamental document — an OSCE Charter. The completion without delay of the drafting of this Charter and its adoption are central elements in placing the work of the OSCE on an orderly basis and will enable us to make that work systematic and transparent. It is only in this way that the Organization will become a genuinely democratic instrument for strengthening confidence and ensuring comprehensive security and stability in its area of responsibility.

The effective countering of threats and challenges in the OSCE area is possible today only if there is co-operation among all the elements of the European security architecture without exception, including the politico-military component, which is one of the most important parts of this architecture. Unfortunately, the imbalance that I have referred to in the work of the Organization primarily affects the first “basket” of the OSCE. The fact is however that arms control and confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) have played a key role in shaping relations between OSCE participating States in the area of security and to this day remain one of the elements key to the future functioning of the Organization.

However, the current situation in the OSCE’s politico-military dimension gives little reason for optimism. The failure of the adapted Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe to enter into force suggests that the majority of participating States are not interested in restoring the relevance and viability of this unique European arms control mechanism. The potential of the politico-military documents of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation in their current form has long since been exhausted while proposals to develop a unique set of tools for Forum are for some reason failing to find support on the part of certain participating States. We once again call attention to the urgent need for collective conceptual consideration of possible ways of developing and modernizing pan-European arms control regimes and CSBMs, and to the search for different ways in which they might be adapted to the changed politico-military situation in the OSCE area. In that connection, we look forward with interest to the additional information to be provided by the delegation of the Russian Federation regarding the proposal for the drafting of a legally binding Treaty on European Security,

within the framework of which questions concerning the indivisibility of security and the problems of arms control in Europe would be resolved.

In conclusion, allow me to wish all the participants in the Conference every success in their work.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.