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DEPARTMENT AND HEAD OF THE OSCE AND COUNCIL OF
EUROPE UNIT OF THE CHIEF DIRECTORATE FOR EUROPE
WITHIN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF BELARUS, AT
THE CONCLUDING MEETING OF THE 19th OSCE ECONOMIC AND
ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM**

Prague, 14 September 2011

**Promotion of common actions and co-operation in the OSCE area in the
fields of sustainable energy and transport**

Opening session

Mr. Chairperson,

On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Belarus, allow me first of all to express my sincere gratitude to the Czech Government and the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) for the cordial reception in Prague and for the excellent organization of this Forum.

As we see it, the clear and informative statements we have just heard from senior officials of the OSCE and also from the Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Mr. Jan Kubiš, set the proper tone for these discussions and attest to the essential importance that participating States and key international organizations ascribe to matters of economic and environmental security and in particular to questions of energy security and transport.

Belarus is firmly convinced that the economic and environmental dimension within the OSCE today requires precisely that kind of heightened attention and the most serious consideration for the reason that, although it has from the very outset been an integral component of the concept of comprehensive security, the potential of the OSCE's "second basket" and the related tools continue to be less than fully exploited.

The subject of this Economic and Environmental Forum – sustainable energy and transport – encompasses precisely those areas in which the OSCE, in our opinion, could do more to assist participating States in enhancing their security, tackling through joint efforts existing problems, and sharing advanced practices and technologies.

We take the view that this Forum, drawing on the discussions and recommendations of the two preparatory meetings in Vienna and Druskininkai, must focus as far as possible on the formulation of strategic and political decisions that might be adopted by the OSCE ministers for foreign affairs at their forthcoming meeting in Vilnius.

In that same context, we are counting on support by participating States for Belarus's proposals to formulate and approve the key OSCE principles of co-operation in the area of energy security that would lead to the emergence of a common denominator bringing together the interests of energy producer, transit and consumer countries. A "food-for-thought" paper on this subject was prepared and distributed by the Belarusian delegation to the OSCE in May of this year.

It is also important to set in train mechanisms for the practical realization of the ideas and proposals put forward within the context of the current cycle of the Economic and Environmental Forum and for transforming them into concrete and meaningful OSCE projects, including projects of a regional and subregional nature. Here much will depend on the active participation of the OCEEA and other executive structures of the Organization.

We should like to take particular note of the critical importance of gradually introducing innovative technologies for the sustainable economic development of participating States and of their energy and transport systems. A maximum contribution by the OSCE in ensuring access for all participating States to such technologies, among other ways through exchanges of information, advanced experience and best practices, would genuinely help to enhance security and stability in the Organization's area of responsibility.

Mr. Chairperson,

Today, literally at the Forum's next session, we shall be engaged in a focused discussion of issues pertaining to the implementation of OSCE commitments in the economic and environmental dimension with emphasis on problems of sustainable energy and transport. In recent times, the importance of fulfilling these commitments has been regularly stressed by the participating States at all levels, including in the declaration of the OSCE Astana Summit of 2010.

Regrettably, we are forced to mention that certain of our partners in the Organization, specifically the United States of America, are continuing, in violation of OSCE principles and commitments, to invoke measures involving sanctions of an economic and other nature against the Republic of Belarus and its citizens. We urgently call on our American colleagues to desist from these practices, which can only undermine the spirit of co-operation in the OSCE region and damage our common security, and we also once again appeal to the OSCE leadership to take a fundamental stand with regard to actions of this kind.

In conclusion, allow me to express the wish that this Forum will prove to be an interesting and constructive event for all those taking part in it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson