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**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS BY THE COMMISSIONER
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE, H.E. NILS
MUIŽNIEKS**

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 27 February 2014

Mr Chairman,

I find myself in broad agreement with the points made by the European Union, and would therefore like to limit myself to a few remarks on the relations between the OSCE and the Council of Europe.

Mr. Chairman, all OSCE participating States struggle to implement OSCE human dimension commitments; some have a longer way to go than others. Some even seem to be moving in the wrong direction, away from our shared commitments and principles.

Mr. Chairman, you have defined strengthened implementation of existing human dimension commitments as one of your top priorities. You have pointed out that closer cooperation between the OSCE and other regional and international organizations would be important in reaching this objective.

I do agree and I therefore welcome this opportunity to discuss with Commissioner Nils Muižnieks the relationship between our two organizations.

Mr Chairman,

Commissioner Muižnieks outlined in his introduction areas in which he is cooperating with OSCE structures and field missions. We should look for ways to strengthen this cooperation. We should look for ways to improve our sharing of information and best practices. Enhanced cooperation is not a goal in itself, but a means of strengthening our effectiveness and efficiency. This can only contribute to greater impact of the efforts of both our organizations.

Mr Chairman,

My next point is the following: When two organisations such as the OSCE and the Council of Europe work on the same or related issues, we must make sure that we do not develop differing norms and standards. That would be in nobody's interest. This does not mean, however, that one organisation cannot be the standard setter.

We have recently seen that we are unable to reach consensus in the OSCE on issues where either the Council of Europe or the UN – or both – have been able to make decisions.

We do not want our OSCE commitments to be weaker than those obligations we have already accepted in other organizations.

This, Mr. Chairman, leads me back to the need for closer cooperation and contact between the OSCE and other regional and international organizations.

Thank you, Mr Chairman