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**PERMANENT MISSION
OF TURKEY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR YUSUF BULUÇ,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY TO THE OSCE
IN RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR KNUT VOLLEBAEK,
HIGH COMMISSIONER ON NATIONAL MINORITIES**

(Permanent Council, 8 November 2007)

Mr. Chairman,

We too welcome the High Commissioner, Ambassador Knut Vollebaek at his first address to the Permanent Council in his new capacity. We listened to his report with interest and attention. My delegation has aligned itself with the joint EU statement responding to the High Commissioner. In my national capacity, I shall proceed to elaborating the point made in the closing paragraph of the EU statement which fairly describes the situation. That is, there are differing views with regard to the involvement of the High Commissioner in the area of integration of “recently arrived migrants” and his potential contribution to drawing up policies in this respect.

Our views on this matter are guided by Ambassador Vollebaek’s advice for not referring to the “who” and the “title” but concentrate on the “how” aspect of the integration, that is as much as the term “new minorities” is avoidable. We are aware of the legal and political implications of the term “new minorities”. The lack of an agreed international definition of what constitutes a “minority” engenders different interpretations on whether the application of specific minority protection should be limited only to citizens. Growing number of experts advocate that international law affords minority rights to newly resident minority groups and non-citizens. They maintain that States are free, and are indeed encouraged, to voluntarily extend minority protection to individuals other than their citizens, notably migrants legally residing in host countries.

In light of his efforts to assist the participating States in devising integration policies which respect diversity, we encourage the High Commissioner to continue his reflection in this area and bring the expertise and *acquis* of the Office of the High Commissioner to bear on the preparation of a set of recommendations to the States with his customary intellectual and institutional boldness.

Thank you.