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Delegation of Belarus

**STATEMENT BY MR. VALERY VORONETSKY,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS
TO THE OSCE, AT THE MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

22 March 2012

**In response to the statements by the delegations of the European Union,
Norway, Switzerland and the United States**

Mr. Chairperson,

We have listened carefully to the statements by the delegations of Denmark (on behalf of the European Union), Norway, Switzerland and the United States and we shall pass their contents on to our capital. For our part we should also like to make a few remarks.

Firstly, I should like to express regret about the increasingly common unfortunate practice by a number of our partners of providing the texts of their statements to interested delegations on the day of the Permanent Council meeting immediately prior to the start. Some delegations do not even bother to announce their statements in advance. Surely such an approach cannot be conducive to a substantive, constructive and genuine dialogue in the Permanent Council, especially if this practice becomes established in our work.

Secondly, our delegation has already informed the Permanent Council of the substance of the verdict against the Belarusian citizens Dmitry Konovalov and Vladislav Kovalev, found guilty by the Supreme Court of the Republic of Belarus on 30 November 2011 of planning and carrying out a terrorist act in the Minsk metro in April 2011.

According to a statement by the Supreme Court of the Republic of Belarus, the criminal case considered by the Supreme Court was in strict compliance with the law. The guilt of those convicted of carrying out the crimes was proven unquestionably during the trial and the court experienced no doubts. After the verdict was delivered on 30 November 2011, all the legal procedures provided for in our legislation were also strictly observed with regard to the case.

Mr. Chairperson,

The temporary application of the death penalty until it is abolished as provided for in the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus is also not in conflict with Belarus's international

obligations, including those within the framework of the OSCE. However, in Belarus the prospects of introducing a moratorium on carrying out death sentences are being thoroughly examined and the issue is being widely discussed in Belarusian society. We must also take into account that according to a referendum held in 1996, the overwhelming majority of the country's population was in favour of retaining capital punishment.

Thirdly, we should like to come back on a point by noting that, pursuant to the law of the Republic of Belarus on the procedure for Belarusian citizens to enter and leave the Republic of Belarus and other legislative acts, the right of a citizen to leave the Republic of Belarus may be temporarily restricted in the interests of national security, public order, protection of morals, public health or the rights and freedoms of other persons.

Article 7 of the aforementioned law provides a full list of the reasons for the temporary restriction of the right of citizens to leave Belarus, including being under suspicion, charged or convicted in a criminal case, preventive surveillance, failure to carry out property, tax or other obligations and bringing of a civil suit against a person.

Pursuant to article 20 of the Belarusian law on the treatment of citizens and legal persons, in the case of disagreement with a decision to refuse permission to leave the country, a Belarusian citizen has the right to appeal through the established legal procedure.

These provisions are not in conflict with Belarus's international obligations.

We should also like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the fact that the United States is expressing concern about freedom of movement in Belarus while itself continuing, in violation of its OSCE commitments, to extend visa restrictions to Belarusian citizens.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.