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Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Belarus to the OSCE

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER OPIMAKH,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF
BELARUS TO THE OSCE, AT THE MEETING OF
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

10 November 2005

**Refusal to issue an entry visa to the United States of America
to a member of the Belarusian delegation to the
60th session of the United Nations General Assembly**

Mr. Chairman,

The Chairman of the Permanent Commission for International Affairs and State Security of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus, Mr. Nikolai Cherginets, intended to participate in the work of the 60th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York from 30 October to 3 November 2005 as a member of the government delegation of the Republic of Belarus.

On 1 October 2005, the Belarusian authorities applied to the United States Embassy in Minsk for an entry visa for Mr. Cherginets. The visa was not issued, however.

In accordance with the Agreement of 1947 between the United Nations and the United States of America regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, the United States authorities undertook to issue visas as promptly as possible to persons invited by the United Nations or its specialized agencies to participate in official United Nations events.

The right of a State's official representative to receive an entry visa as promptly as possible for any country in which the headquarters of an international organization is located is also enshrined in the 1975 Vienna Convention on the Representation of States in their Relations with International Organizations of a Universal Character.

During meetings with Belarusian representatives in Minsk and Washington, the United States authorities explained that Mr. Cherginets had not been issued a visa because of his involvement in the monitoring of the United States elections in 2004, referring to the fact that on that occasion the Belarusian parliamentarian had received a United States visa so as to enable him to participate in a United Nations event and that the United States authorities had not been officially notified of Mr. Cherginets's intention to participate in election monitoring in Washington.

We should like to draw attention to the fact that Mr. Cherginets was in the United States capital and monitored the presidential elections as part of the official delegation of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. The United States authorities allocated Mr. Cherginets a district in which to monitor the elections and had information regarding his official status as an OSCE international observer.

We regret that the parliamentarian's involvement in election monitoring in the United States, as a member of an OSCE mission at that, has resulted in the United States refusing to grant him an entry visa.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.