

PC.DEL/337/10
30 April 2010

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of Belarus

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

29 April 2010

On the local elections in Belarus

Mr. Chairperson,

We should like to briefly inform the Permanent Council that on 25 April Belarus held elections of deputies to the 26th convening of the local councils.

According to preliminary information, 21,293 deputies were elected. In 10 districts re-run elections will be held. Voter turnout stood at 79.5 per cent. The official results of the poll will be announced on 30 April by the Central Commission of the Republic of Belarus on Elections and Republic-Wide Referendums.

A noteworthy feature of these elections was the fact that they took place on the basis of the amended electoral legislation. As we have already informed the Permanent Council, the amendments introduced involved a simplification of the procedure for putting forward and registering candidates for deputies, for including in the make-up of the election commissions representatives of political parties and non-governmental organizations, for conducting meetings with voters, and for the way in which candidates put together their own election campaign budgets.

These amendments were largely the result of the constructive collaboration between the election organizers in Belarus and experts from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) aimed at further improving the country's election laws and practices. In the view of many experts and of those who participated in the elections themselves, the changes had a positive impact on a great many aspects involved in the holding of the elections, including the establishment of election commissions at different levels and the matter of candidate registration. Of course, these local elections were not without certain shortcomings having to do with the proper application locally of the amended legislation, something that will be taken into account by the Belarusian electoral authorities when preparing for and organizing election campaigns in the future. The complaints received along with information on violations are currently being studied in the manner provided for.

The local elections in Belarus were monitored by more than 18,000 internal observers. Despite the fact that there is no tradition of inviting international observers to monitor elections at the local level, the Central Election Commission of Belarus also accredited as observers 50 representatives of the diplomatic corps in Minsk, who were given the chance to observe the preparations for and conduct of the elections.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.