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Delegation of Belarus

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS TO THE OSCE
AT THE 925th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

15 October 2012

Regarding the parliamentary elections in Belarus

Mr. Chairperson,

We listened carefully to the statements by the delegation of Cyprus on behalf of the European Union and by the delegations of the United States of America and the Russian Federation and shall bring the points made in them to the attention of our Government in Minsk.

With respect to the parliamentary elections held in Belarus, we should like to stress that they took place in a calm and conflict-free environment, in accordance with national legislation.

Belarus made full-scale international election observation possible, including observation by the OSCE, and in so doing confirmed its commitment to its international obligations. Invitations were sent out in good time to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the OSCE and a number of inter-parliamentary bodies. All the necessary conditions were created to enable the international observers to work properly and without hindrance.

We should like to draw attention to the fact that, on the basis of its observation activities, the CIS mission came to the conclusion that “the elections of 23 September 2012 were conducted in accordance with the Constitution and Electoral Code of the Republic of Belarus and complied with the universally accepted democratic norms. The elections were transparent and open and ensured the free expression of the will of Belarus’s citizens”. As regards the vote count, the mission noted that this took place in an open manner and that the observers were given a real opportunity to monitor the ballot counting procedure under transparent conditions. According to the CIS observers, the irregularities identified were minor ones and under no circumstances could they have influenced the outcome of the voting since most were of a technical nature. The CIS mission report was circulated within the OSCE on 4 October 2012.

We are disappointed, but not surprised at the conclusions by the OSCE observation mission, which assessed the elections in its traditional critical manner. We expected to hear

more balanced and objective conclusions. Unfortunately, as in previous years, the OSCE mission was unable to move away completely from politically motivated attitudes and clichés that have nothing to do with the electoral process. A few comments made in the OSCE's preliminary report are contentious, to say the least.

At the same time, we note that in its assessments the OSCE mission also referred directly to a number of positive aspects of the election campaign, such as the substantial expansion of rights and opportunities for participants in the elections owing to the application of the revised Electoral Code, the high level of organization of the work of the election commissions and their observance of the procedures established by law, including early voting, the provision of free prime airtime to candidates on State television and radio channels, and a calm pre-election environment in the country.

For our part, we should like to assure you that Belarus is prepared to listen most attentively to justified and constructive recommendations by the international observers who were present in our country. Their conclusions and assessments will be carefully studied in the context of further improving electoral legislation and practical application of the law.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.