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

20 May 2010

**In response to the statement by the delegation of the
United States of America**

Mr. Chairperson,

With regard to the statement made by the delegation of the United States of America we should like to emphasize that in compliance with Belarus's OSCE commitments, no one restricts the attendance by foreign diplomats at open court sessions. In my statement to the Permanent Council on 13 May of this year, I pointed out that the trial before the Supreme Court in the Avtukhovich case was conducted publicly and openly. The court hearings were attended by representatives of civil society and non-governmental media, the diplomatic corps, international organizations, and also the OSCE Office in Minsk.

In the statement at the last Permanent Council meeting we questioned the expediency and the qualification of diplomats for making legal inferences about court proceedings, which then form the basis for further political statements, including ones made within the Permanent Council.

Considering that Mr. Avtukhovich's council is planning to appeal against the Supreme Court sentence, we regard such statements as an attempt to put pressure on the national judiciary authorities with the aim of undermining their independence in contravention of the principle of the rule of law enshrined in OSCE documents.

Regrettably, such statements are becoming a regular occurrence.

We are convinced that there is a wide range of other useful directions and areas in which additional efforts by American diplomats would be conducive to the fruitful development of bilateral relations between our countries.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.