

Canadian Delegation to the  
Organization for Security & Cooperation  
in Europe



Délégation du Canada auprès de  
l'Organisation pour la sécurité et la coopération  
en Europe

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF CANADA TO THE OSCE  
612<sup>TH</sup> PLENARY MEETING OF PERMANENT COUNCIL  
08 JUNE 2006**

**CURRENT ISSUES: BELARUS**

Canada joins in expressing its concern at the measures taken by Belarusian authorities that threaten the activities of the Belarus Helsinki Committee.

In particular, we are troubled by the 24 May 2006 request of the Belarusian Ministry of Justice to the Supreme Court calling for suspension of the activities of the Belarus Helsinki Committee. We share the concern that there are political motives behind the allegations of tax evasion and other charges.

We join in calling upon the Belarusian authorities to immediately cease their campaign of harassment against the Belarus Helsinki Committee.

Forcing the closure of any NGO clashes with the fundamental principles of respect for civil society and democratic discourse. These measures further call into question the respect for democratic standards in Belarus.

What is more, by targeting the Belarus Helsinki Committee, the NGO whose primary purpose is to monitor compliance with OSCE commitments and standards, these measures are an affront to our collective commitments.

Canada joins in expressing its full support for the work of the Belarus Helsinki Committee as we believe it plays an essential role in Belarus.