

Delegation of Belarus

**STATEMENT BY  
THE PERMANENT DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS  
TO THE OSCE AT THE 951st MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

9 May 2013

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

Mr. Chairperson,

We have listened carefully to the statement by the delegation of the United States of America and will bring the points made in it to the attention of our government.

We should like to inform you that the traditional “Chernobyl Way” rally did indeed take place in Minsk on 26 April 2013, timed to coincide with the 27th anniversary of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant.

This event was sanctioned by the municipal authorities, and for the most part proceeded in a fairly peaceful and organized manner.

To our knowledge, several participants in the rally were detained, but they were released once their identities had been established and the circumstances had been clarified. Six persons, including the two journalists in question, have been convicted by a court of law on administrative charges of disobeying the lawful orders of law enforcement officers. Belarusian legislation provides for the possibility of appealing against the decisions of the court, an opportunity which some of the convicted persons have already taken advantage of.

Mr. Chairperson,

Demonstrations, pickets, protest actions and spontaneous rallies take place virtually every day in different countries throughout the OSCE area. Not all of them, however, by virtue of political considerations and the selectiveness of our Western partners, become the subject of discussion in the OSCE Permanent Council. At the same time, the requirements of ensuring freedom of assembly and implementing the corresponding OSCE commitments apply equally to all participating States.

In this connection, we cannot but draw attention, for example, to the harsh treatment by the United States police of participants in the May Day demonstration in Seattle.

According to information available to us, in addition to arrests, the special police units used clubs, tear gas, pepper spray and flash-bang grenades against the demonstrators. The police also used force against participants in the peaceful demonstration to mark International Labour Day in New York, detaining some of them. The mass arrests of participants in the recent protest actions in Washington, D.C., against the construction of an oil pipeline from Canada to Texas and in defence of the rights of persons with disabilities are also revealing and symptomatic in this regard.

We should therefore like to return the United States delegation's "concern", and we hope that in a spirit of a constructive dialogue our American colleagues will inform the Permanent Council about the aforementioned events and the grounds for the use of force by the police in the context of OSCE commitments, including the use of special equipment.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.