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**STATEMENT BY
THE PERMANENT DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS
TO THE OSCE AT THE 941st MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

14 February 2013

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

Mr. Chairperson,

We have taken note of the statement made by the delegation of the United States of America.

Since we learned from our United States colleagues only today of the subject matter of that statement, we do not believe it possible or necessary to comment on its substance, especially as on a number of aspects it does not reflect reality, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues do not fall under the competence or mandate of the OSCE. In this connection, we are entirely in agreement with the positions of principle expressed earlier on this matter on a number of occasions in the Permanent Council by the delegations of the Holy See and Russia.

We should also like to point out that contrary to the information presented here, Iryna Khalip has been officially granted permission to leave the country temporarily.

We are pleased that the United States called attention to the report by the Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the human rights situation in certain countries and look forward to dialogue within the Permanent Council on the cases of human rights violations in the United States mentioned in that report.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.