

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

**DELEGATION OF CANADA TO THE OSCE  
STATEMENT BY YVES BEAULIEU, CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES  
ON THE ELECTIONS IN BELARUS  
845<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL  
23 DECEMBER 2010**

**Agenda item: Current issues: Elections in Belarus**

Thank you Chairperson,

As Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lawrence Cannon, said earlier this week, "Canada is deeply disappointed by the Government of Belarus's conduct of the December 19 presidential election".

We condemn the use of violence and call on the authorities to release those who were unjustly arrested. Reports of the intimidation and arrest of human rights activists and journalists are also very troubling. We call on the Belarusian authorities to account for the whereabouts and safety of those detained and to conduct transparent investigations into the violence. We remain concerned that the Government of Belarus continues to flagrantly violate the human rights of Belarusians and impede the country's democratic development. Canada is also very concerned about the arrest of opposition candidates during the violent crackdown against demonstrators that followed the election.

We would also like to note that the OSCE observation mission raised two issues that are of particular concern to Canada: the lack of transparency in vote counting and the limited access to state media for opposition candidates.

The OSCE's findings come as a disappointment. Canada hopes that the Government of Belarus will carefully study the OSCE recommendations and implement the changes necessary for the country to meet accepted standards for democratic elections. We will work with other free and democratic societies in developing our response to this situation.

In conclusion, Canada will continue to uphold the restrictions on official contact and trade with Belarus that were put in place after the flawed elections of 2006.

Thank you.