

Delegation of Belarus

**STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT DELEGATION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF BELARUS TO THE OSCE AT THE 1006th MEETING
OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

3 July 2014

On the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Belarus

Mr. Chairperson,

Today the Republic of Belarus is celebrating Independence Day, which is inextricably linked to one of the most important events in the history of our State – liberation from the fascist occupiers. Exactly 70 years ago, in 1944, Minsk, the capital city of Belarus, was liberated.

For the people of Belarus, this date is a symbol of national pride, valour and glory, a byword for the unity and solidarity of our people and the independence and invincibility of our country.

The liberation of Belarus was one stage in the long and difficult path taken by the peoples of Europe towards the final victory over fascism in 1945. This victory is of particular significance for Belarus because the Belarusian people paid a huge price for it, suffering massive human and material losses. None of the countries involved in the war suffered such devastating genocide and destruction as Belarus. Almost one in three inhabitants of our country perished during the war years. More than 200 of the 270 towns in Belarus were destroyed, as were around 90 per cent of the buildings in Minsk. Over 9,000 villages were wiped out, 628 of them torched along with their inhabitants. The total material losses at pre-war prices amounted to around half of our country's national wealth.

Together with the other peoples of the Soviet Union and the anti-Hitler coalition, the people of Belarus were not simply victorious in defending the right to live on their native soil, but also made a huge contribution to the great, historic victory over Nazism.

The contribution of the Belarusian people to the victory over fascism afforded Belarus the universally recognized right to participate fully in global politics, something that was embodied by our signing of the Charter of the United Nations and our inclusion among the founding countries of that organization.

Mr. Chairperson,

An important date will be commemorated next year – the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the victory over Nazism.

The anniversary of the victory should serve as a reminder to everyone that the tragic lessons of history must not be erased from our memory. This is especially important and relevant today as we note with alarm the growth of aggressive nationalism, neo-fascism and neo-Nazi ideology, the glorification of Nazism, the promotion of racist ideas and the fuelling of xenophobia and intolerance in the OSCE area.

We believe that the OSCE, as one of the key inter-State forums for ensuring stability, security and co-operation, should adopt a proactive stance and take decisive measures to consolidate the efforts of the international community to counter these negative tendencies so as to prevent a repeat of the twentieth-century disaster that was the Second World War.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.