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Delegation of Belarus

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALYAKSANDR SYCHOV,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS  
TO THE OSCE, AT THE MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

22 July 2011

**On the situation regarding the publication *News of the World***

Mr. Chairperson,

We are closely following the dramatically developing situation in the United Kingdom in connection with the publication *News of the World*, whose reporters are accused of illegally tapping and intercepting the electronic communications of thousands of British citizens.

As a result of the developing scandal, this newspaper has been closed down, a number of former members of its editorial staff have been provisionally detained, and many journalists have been fired and their rights have thus been to a certain extent infringed.

The events in the United Kingdom highlight once again all the problems and challenges arising in connection with the activities of the media in the OSCE area.

In particular, it is a question of finding the right balance between the freedom of the media and responsibility on the part of journalists, and between the right to access to information and respect for the right to privacy.

We are convinced that the situation surrounding the *News of the World* clearly demonstrates the need for greater professionalism in the work of the media and for the observance of ethical standards in journalism, and the importance of countering illegal methods of obtaining information, effectively combating corruption in this field and preventing excessive media concentration.

We expect the British authorities to conduct a full and impartial investigation of this matter and to inform the OSCE Permanent Council of the results of the investigation in an appropriate form.

We particularly hope that, in the very near future, the causes will be established of the death on 18 July, under unclear circumstances, of Sean Hoare, a former reporter for this British tabloid, who was the first to talk about the illegal activities of the editorial staff of the

*News of the World* and to admit the practice of telephone tapping, something which cannot but arouse serious concern and which raises many questions requiring an answer.

We are also awaiting a reaction to the situation concerning the *News of the World* from the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media in the context of the commitments of the participating States in the media sphere, and also of the regular discussions taking place in the Permanent Council on this subject.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.