



United States Mission to the OSCE
**Statement on the Conviction of Mr.
Mikalay Awtukovich in Belarus**

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 13, 2010

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States is concerned by the May 6 conviction in Minsk of Mr. Mikalay Awtukovich and three others on charges related to illegal weapons possession. We share the concerns of our EU colleagues, as expressed in the May 10 statement by the representative of the EU Presidency in Minsk, regarding procedural flaws and apparent political motivations in the case.

In this and other cases, we have long stressed to the Belarusian authorities the importance of observing due process. We had hoped that the Belarusian authorities would take this opportunity to demonstrate a strengthening of due process and the independence of the judiciary. Unfortunately, there are reasons to question the conduct of this trial with respect to the civil rights of Mr. Awtukovich and the three others.

As we have noted before, improvement in the relationship of the United States with Belarus can come only when the Belarusian authorities show a greater respect for the basic civil and human rights of the Belarusian people.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.