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**STATEMENT BY THE
DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS AT THE
924th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

20 September 2012

Regarding freedom of assembly in the United States of America

Mr. Chairperson,

A year ago, in September 2011, the Occupy Wall Street movement sprang up in the United States of America as a civil protest action to draw public attention to the consequences of the financial and economic crisis and to safeguard socio-economic rights.

The use of force by the New York police to break up the protest camp in Zuccotti Park marked the beginning of massive demonstrations across the country and beyond its borders, demonstrations which are continuing to this day.

According to various estimates, more than 6,000 demonstrators involved in Occupy actions in different cities across the country have been arrested by the United States police during the past year.

The protests were generally accompanied by unrest and the use of disproportionate force by the law enforcement authorities and, at times, riot gear and specialist equipment.

Recently the participants in this essentially global protest marked the anniversary of their movement. Demonstrations were held in more than 30 cities around the world, including the event at the New York Stock Exchange.

Yet again we have witnessed arrests on a massive scale by the New York police, who on 17 September and the day before detained around 200 peaceful citizens who had gone out onto the streets once again to make their views known. The actions taken by the police to disperse wheelchair users who had also joined the event in New York were particularly shameless.

We have also taken note of the statement yesterday by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, who expressed her concern about the journalists detained while covering this event.

In this connection, we call on the United States authorities to observe their OSCE commitments, in particular the commitment to ensure freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of the media.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.