

PC.DEL/830/12
7 September 2012

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of Belarus

**STATEMENT BY MR. VALERY VORONETSKY,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS
TO THE OSCE, AT THE 923rd MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

6 September 2012

**In response to the statements by the delegations of the European Union,
the United States of America and Canada**

Mr. Chairperson,

We have listened attentively to the statements by the delegations of Cyprus (on behalf of the European Union), the United States of America, Canada and Russia. We shall bring the points raised in them to the attention of the authorities in our capital.

We note the considerable interest on the part of our Western partners in the situation in Belarus in light of the parliamentary elections scheduled to be held in September 2012. In fact, these elections constitute an important political event in the life of our country. However, we should like to caution our esteemed colleagues against attempts to artificially link everything that is happening in Belarus with the holding of the parliamentary elections. The specific cases mentioned in the statements by the delegations of the European Union, the United States and Canada are the subject of inquiries on the part of the competent law enforcement and judicial authorities in Belarus within the terms of the existing legislation.

As regards the elections themselves, our delegation has regularly briefed our OSCE partners on the preparations for them. I believe that many have drawn attention to the circulation through the OSCE distribution system of the information material on this matter. We hope that this material will prove useful for interested delegations and the appropriate OSCE institutions.

At the present time, the process of registering candidates for seats in parliament has been concluded. In comparison with the parliamentary elections in 2008, a quarter more candidates have been registered during the current campaign. As a result of the changes that have been made to the election laws, which have significantly simplified the procedure for putting forward candidates from political parties, there has been a fourfold increase in the number of party representatives in the current elections.

Isolated rejections during the registration process were basically related to the questionable authenticity of the signatures collected in support of persons wishing to be put

forward as candidates and of the information submitted in the declarations regarding income and property. At the same time, a number of would-be candidates successfully have appealed their rejected registration applications to the Central Election Commission and the Supreme Court of the Republic of Belarus.

The parliamentary election campaign has also started, including in the mass media. Free airtime is being made available to candidates on State television and radio channels, along with the possibility for publishing their election programmes in State print media. For the first time, television debates by the candidates have been organized.

I might also recall that at the invitation of the Belarusian Government observation missions from the Commonwealth of Independent States and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights are working in Belarus. All the necessary assistance is being made available by the national authorities to these international observers.

In view of the interest in the subject of the parliamentary elections in Belarus, we shall continue to keep our colleagues informed on this matter.

In conclusion, we should like to note that the issue of Belarusian-Swedish relations is a strictly bilateral matter. We draw our colleagues' attention to the statement in this regard by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus on 8 August 2012.

Thank you for your attention.