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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**

10 July 2008

**Regarding the invitation to OSCE observers to the  
parliamentary elections in Belarus**

Mr. Chairman,

In accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus and an order by the President of the Republic, elections will be held on 28 September 2008 to the Chamber of Representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus.

Guided by national legislation and also by the relevant provisions of the Copenhagen Document of 1990 and the OSCE Charter for European Security of 1999, the Belarusian Government has sent an invitation to the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) to take part in the international observation of the forthcoming parliamentary elections.

A copy of the letter containing the invitation, signed by Mr. Sergey Martynov, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, has been sent to the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE. As pointed out in that letter, the Belarusian Government is prepared to make available the necessary assistance to an ODIHR election monitoring mission.

We hope that in organizing and conducting its monitoring activities in Belarus the Office will take full account of the comments that have been repeatedly expressed by our delegation regarding the work of the ODIHR in observing elections and that the assessments and conclusions reached by the mission as a result of their observations will be of an objective character free of political considerations.

Mr. Chairman,

The Belarusian authorities have on more than one occasion reaffirmed their commitment to conducting the 2008 election campaign in as open and transparent a manner as possible, in accordance with national laws and international obligations. Confirmation of this can be seen in our willingness to accept an ODIHR technical mission even before the

official announcement of the elections and in our constructive collaboration with the Office's experts following their arrival in Belarus. We should like to inform the Permanent Council of one other step taken by the Belarusian side.

Together with the order setting the date for the elections, on 24 June 2008 the President of Belarus also signed a decree on members of the Belarusian Central Election Commission to be entitled to a consultative vote.

The purpose of the document is to ensure broader participation by political parties in the election campaign. It entitles them to send to the Central Election Commission one commission member each with the right to a consultative vote. The decree also regulates the procedure under which political parties can send their members to the Central Election Commission and defines their rights and obligations.

A similar approach to participation by political parties in elections can be found in the election laws of a number of countries, in addition to which it is consistent with generally recognized principles and norms of international law as regards the organization of electoral processes.

In that connection, our delegation would like to call attention to the statement by the Chairwoman of the Central Election Commission of Belarus, who, in her comments on the document, pointed out in particular that this year the decree had been signed at the very beginning of the election campaign. "In this way, Belarus is demonstrating to all concerned that these parliamentary elections envisage a large turnout on the part of all the country's political forces. The provisions of this decree will ensure that different political points of view will be given a hearing at the meetings of the Central Election Commission. This will greatly enliven the current election campaign and will contribute to the democratic character of the elections and to the transparency of the electoral process."

The Belarusian Government takes the position that the adoption of this decree will help the political parties to more fully exercise their constitutional right to participation in the elections.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.