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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**

15 November 2007

Mr. Chairman,

On 13 November of this year the Department of the Treasury of the United States of America adopted a decision freezing the assets and confiscating the property of the “Belneftekhim” concern on the territory of the United States and prohibiting United States individuals and legal entities from engaging in trade and economic relations with “Belneftekhim” and its offices abroad. Responding to this published decision, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus has voiced a strong protest.

A note sent to the United States Embassy in the Republic of Belarus contains the following statement. I quote.

“By taking this unilateral decision, the Government of the United States has violated the Memorandum on Security Guarantees in connection with the accession of the Republic of Belarus to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of 5 December 1994, in which the United States, in return for Belarus’s renunciation of the possession of nuclear weapons, undertook not to apply against the Republic of Belarus measures of economic coercion for the purpose of subjecting Belarus to the interests of the United States.

“The Government of the United States has also breached the agreement in force between Belarus and the United States on trade relations, under which the United States undertook to improve access for Belarusian goods and services to the American market and to create for them the best possible commercial opportunities.

“The decision of the Government of the United States with regard to the ‘Belneftekhim’ concern runs counter also to the principles and rules of international trade established and operating within the framework of the World Trade Organization.

“The application of measures of economic pressure for political reasons is unacceptable from the point of view of the principles of international law laid down in the Charter of the United Nations, in the United Nations Declaration of 21 December 1965 on the Inadmissibility of Intervention in the Domestic Affairs of States and the Protection of Their Independence and Sovereignty, and in the United Nations General Assembly resolution of

22 December 2005 condemning unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries.

“The Government of the Republic of Belarus resolutely demands that the Government of the United States of America immediately return the assets and property to their rightful owner, which is the ‘Belneftekhim’ concern, and lift all restrictions on trade and economic operations by the concern on the territory of the United States, in accordance with the letter and spirit of the aforementioned memorandum and agreement.

“The Government of the Republic of Belarus reserves the right to take appropriate countermeasures, as provided for in international practice, and to demand compensation for the losses incurred by the ‘Belneftekhim’ concern. The Belarusian Government also regards itself as no longer bound by any financial or other obligations that have arisen or that may arise on the territory of the United States and beyond its borders in connection with the decision of the United States Department of the Treasury with regard to the ‘Belneftekhim’ concern, and holds the Government of the United States of America accountable for those obligations.” End of quotation.

Mr. Chairman,

Our delegation reserves the right to return to this question at a meeting of the Permanent Council in the very near future, as provided for by the existing mechanisms and procedures of the OSCE.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of today’s meeting of the Permanent Council.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.