



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

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538th Plenary Meeting

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**DECISION No. 655
EXTENSION OF THE MANDATE OF THE
OSCE OFFICE IN MINSK**

The Permanent Council,

Recalling its Decision No. 589 of 18 December 2003,

Decides to extend the mandate of the OSCE Office in Minsk until 31 December 2005.

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT
UNDER PARAGRAPH 79 (CHAPTER 6) OF THE
FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE HELSINKI CONSULTATIONS**

By the Delegation of Belarus:

“In connection with the adoption of the decision on the extension of the mandate of the OSCE Office in Minsk until 31 December 2005 our Delegation would like to make the following interpretative statement.

1. The Republic of Belarus reiterates that the procedure of the implementation of all projects and programmes of the OSCE Office in Minsk in accordance with Permanent Council Decisions No. 486 of 28 June 2002 and No. 526 of 30 December 2002, foresees prior consultations with the Government of the host country. The Republic of Belarus understands that these consultations should result in the agreement by the Government to implementation of any project or programme. Any activity financed through extra-budgetary contributions cannot be carried out without the agreement of the host country. Project activities of the OSCE Office in Minsk should be carried out in a balanced way for all the areas determined by its mandate, and should respond to the real needs of the host country.
2. The OSCE Office in Minsk should carry out monitoring of the development of the situation in the areas where it is to provide the assistance to the Government of Belarus, on the basis of factual data and using in a balanced way all sources of information. The coverage of any event or fact without presenting an official position of the Government of the host country would be unacceptable. In its reports the Office should, first and foremost, report on its real work in order to implement its mandate. It should refrain from a political assessment of events and from making predictions on the development of the situation in the host country.
3. The OSCE Office in Minsk in its activities should be guided, *inter alia*, by the principle of political neutrality and non-interference in the internal affairs of Belarus.
4. Having agreed to the extension of the mandate of the OSCE Office in Minsk for the year 2005, the Republic of Belarus at the same time proceeds from the understanding of the necessity to reform the institute of OSCE field presences and to adopt concrete decisions in this regard. The Delegation of Belarus calls upon the participating States to continue more actively the work started within the appropriate Group of Friends.

I request that this interpretative statement be attached to the Journal of today's meeting.”