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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

26 January 2012

**Regarding the situation in Belarus**

Mr. Chairperson,

We should like to make the following comments with regard to the statements we have heard today from the European Union and the United States of America concerning the recent events in Belarus.

As we have already noted, statements critical of the Belarusian authorities were made at virtually every meeting of the Permanent Council last year. Unfortunately, this practice is also continuing this year. In our view, this pressure on Belarus is leading to tension between the participating States and having a negative impact on the overall atmosphere in our Organization. We consider this to be dangerous. In addition, all this is making it difficult to constructively discuss the most pressing issues facing the OSCE and to develop joint steps for solving them.

We urge all our colleagues as well as the Chairmanship to move towards a dialogue with Belarus based on mutual respect. We believe this is the only way to maintain a positive atmosphere in the OSCE.

Thank you for your attention.