

PC.DEL/902/05
16 September 2005

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Belarus to the OSCE

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALYAKSANDR SYCHOV,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS
TO THE OSCE, AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE
PERMANENT COUNCIL**

15 September 2005

The disturbances in Belfast on 10-12 September 2005

Mr. Chairman,

We are seriously concerned about the disturbances, outbreaks of violence and clashes between demonstrators and police that took place a few days ago in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

As a result of these disturbances in the capital of Northern Ireland, a large number of demonstrators, ordinary peaceful citizens and members of the law-enforcement agencies were injured.

In order to disperse the protestors, the police and also the military who were specially called in used plastic bullets and water canons. In addition, there were also scattered instances involving the use by the police and the military of live ammunition. As has been reported, these were the most serious disturbances in Northern Ireland since the end of the 1990s.

We are concerned not only at the disturbances that have occurred and the actions of the law-enforcement agencies against the demonstrators, but also at the reaction to these events in Belfast — or rather the lack of any reaction — on the part of the OSCE.

We do not have the slightest doubt that had a far less significant clash taken place of my country or in any other country to the east of the European Union border, we would already have had a detailed discussion of the situation in the Permanent Council. The reality, however, is such that in some countries of the OSCE the actions of the law-enforcement agencies in maintaining public order find great resonance within the walls of the Permanent Council, while other incidents, which unquestionably are more brutal and violent in their character, are passed over in silence.

We cannot accept a situation of this kind.

Today, despite the sharp deterioration in the situation and the serious threat to security, we are witnessing the absolute disengagement on the part of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe from matters that lie within its direct competence.

We realize that underlying this conflict are deep-seated historical differences that are today being manifested in an atmosphere of embitterment and are taking on increasingly evident characteristics of a violent conflict.

The repeated references by the United Kingdom representatives to existing mechanisms for resolving the Northern Ireland problem appear, in the light of these latest events, at the very least unconvincing. We do not call into doubt these mechanisms themselves, but it is obvious that they are inadequately effective and that they have been seen not to work as they should.

We would propose that we should once again give thought together to how our Organization might provide assistance in this matter. In March of this year a proposal was already made to dispatch OSCE fact-finding missions to Northern Ireland. We think it would be useful to once again consider the possibility of doing so. We should like to call upon the Chairmanship and the Conflict Prevention Centre of the OSCE Secretariat to give closer study to a possible contribution of the OSCE towards the settlement of the Northern Ireland question. We also think that the senior OSCE adviser on policing matters might share with us his views on this subject.

Such are the proposals of the Belarusian delegation regarding the recent events in Belfast.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.