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Delegation of Belarus

**STATEMENT BY MR. VALERY VORONETSKY,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS
TO THE OSCE, AT THE 907th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

29 March 2012

In response to the statement by the European Union

Mr. Chairperson,

In connection with the statement we have heard on behalf of the European Union, we should like to cite the comment made in that regard by the press secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus (I quote):

“The Belarusian Government regrets the decision taken by the Council of the European Union to introduce additional sanctions against a number of Belarusian citizens and enterprises. This step makes even more remote the prospects for a normalization of relations and a resumption of dialogue on issues of a sensitive nature for the parties concerned.

European politicians are captives to a conflict mentality and remain hostages to a logic of coercion and blackmail.” (End of quotation)

Mr. Chairperson,

It is noteworthy that on the day the European Union imposed its latest sanctions against Belarus, 23 March 2012, the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva adopted a resolution entitled “Human rights and unilateral coercive measures”.

The resolution specifically underscores the fact that “unilateral coercive measures ... are contrary to international law, international humanitarian law, the Charter of the United Nations and the norms and principles governing peaceful relations among States”.

The United Nations Human Rights Council expressed its concern at the fact that unilateral coercive measures exert a negative effect on human rights, development, international relations, trade, investment and co-operation.

The Council called on all States to cease this practice and condemned the “continued unilateral application and enforcement by certain powers of such measures as tools of political or economic pressure against any country ... with a view to preventing these

countries from exercising their right to decide, of their own free will, their own political, economic and social systems”.

Mr. Chairperson,

For us it is obvious that the use by the European Union, the United States of America, Canada and Norway of restrictive measures against independent and sovereign States lies outside the framework of international law, undermines the foundations of the established system of international relations and will inevitably lead to an increase in confrontation, a crisis of confidence and serious negative consequences for international security. This approach has no future and is dangerous.

We should like to urgently call on our partners to heed the views of the United Nations Human Rights Council, to desist from a sanctions-oriented policy against third countries and to be guided strictly by the principles of international law, including the principles and commitments of the OSCE.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.