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**STATEMENT BY
THE PERMANENT DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS
TO THE OSCE AT THE 927th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

25 October 2012

**Regarding the threats of criminal prosecution of OSCE observers
in the United States of America**

Mr. Chairperson,

We continue to follow closely the election campaign in the United States.

Our delegation raised a number of questions at the Permanent Council meeting on 6 September regarding the problematic aspects of the United States election legislation in the context of OSCE commitments. However, we have received no response of any kind from our United States partners to our questions or, we might add, to our statement of 20 September regarding freedom of assembly and expression in the United States.

The recently released interim report of the Limited Election Observation Mission (LEOM) in the United States of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) points to serious deficiencies and potential irregularities in the election organization process. This casts doubt on the possibility of holding the elections in full accordance with OSCE commitments and associated international standards.

At the same time, yesterday's statement by Ambassador Janez Lenarčič, the Director of the OSCE/ODIHR, regarding the threat of criminal prosecution of OSCE observers in the United States cannot fail to arouse serious concern. In our view this calls for an appropriate response from the participating States. This is an unprecedented situation within the OSCE that places the whole institution of election observation at risk.

The contents of the letter of Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott to Ambassador Daan Everts, the Head of the OSCE/ODIHR LEOM in the United States, clearly show the real attitude in the United States to the OSCE's election observation activities and to the Office's co-operation with non-governmental organizations that are critical of the United States authorities.

We should like to hear an explanation from our United States colleagues of the situation that has developed.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.