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Delegation of the Russian Federation

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

3 March 2011

Regarding Belarus

Mr. Chairperson,

The statements we have heard from a number of delegations on the situation in Belarus make references to a final report distributed on 22 February 2011 by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) mission observing the presidential election. We note with regret that patent distortions and recommendations which exceed the framework of election observation are evident in this report. They largely echo the preliminary conclusions and findings prepared by the mission on the day after the election.

At the Permanent Council meeting on 23 December 2010, we spoke in detail about the clearly unbalanced and politicized nature of these assessments and their evident divergence from the positions taken in the mission's interim reports. Yet another particularity of election monitoring in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) leaps to the fore. As in the case of Belarus, the ODIHR missions' experts perceive isolated, even petty shortcomings in the electoral laws and practice of CIS States in a highly critical manner, although they are highly permissive towards similar, if not more serious problems in countries "to the west of Vienna".

It is clear that, unless uniform, collectively agreed rules on election monitoring are worked out – something that Russia and a number of member States of the Collective Security Treaty Organization have insisted on in recent years – we will, as in the past, encounter the flawed practice of double standards and subjective assessments of elections. Incidentally, at the recent Winter Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, several of the members who spoke subjected the methodological and practical work of the ODIHR missions to serious criticism. For this reason, we again call for the elaboration of a consensus-based regulatory framework for observing elections, which we see as the only key to resolving the contradictions that arise regularly in this sphere of activity of the OSCE.

Thank you for your attention.