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Delegation of Belarus

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

20 January 2011

**In response to the statement by the  
United States of America regarding Belarus**

Mr. Chairperson,

Our delegation listened carefully to the statements by the delegations of the United States of America and the Russian Federation. The content of those statements will be brought to the attention of the authorities in Minsk.

We should like to recall that at recent meetings of the Permanent Council and of the Preparatory Committee we have already provided the delegations with detailed information regarding the recent presidential elections in the Republic of Belarus, the events that followed in the wake of those elections and the reasons for the decision not to extend the mandate of the OSCE Office in Minsk.

In that connection, permit me to merely note, quite briefly, that the investigation of the events in Minsk on 19 December 2010, which escalated into large-scale rioting, is continuing. The necessary investigatory measures are being taken by the law enforcement authorities within the framework of our legislation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus is in constant contact with the law enforcement authorities, and our delegation is prepared to keep the interested delegations informed of the further progress of the inquiry and its results.

With regard to the closure of the OSCE Office in Minsk, we believe that, in line with the approaches that exist within the OSCE, in this matter the opinion of the host country must be respected and should take priority. We are pleased that practical work has begun for the “technical closure” of the OSCE Office in Minsk, a procedure that, we trust, will be carried out in an organized and effective manner and quite speedily. In that same connection, we by and large support the plan for the administrative termination of the operations of the Office, which was submitted by the OSCE Secretariat during the informal consultations of the Advisory Committee on Management and Finance on 18 January, and are prepared to work closely with others in resolving all the technical questions.

We should like to underscore that the Belarusian Government continues to be engaged in dialogue with its OSCE partners concerning a wide range of issues. Consultations have been held between the Belarusian and Lithuanian Ministries of Foreign Affairs at the deputy minister level, and discussions are proceeding regarding Belarus's future joint work together with the executive structures of our Organization, specifically involving the Secretariat, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

We favour calm and constructive dialogue based on mutual respect, it being our conviction that only dialogue of this kind provides the sole possible means enabling us to work together and co-operate.

That being the case, we find somewhat strange the tone heard in today's statement by the distinguished representative of the United States. We believe that, just like any other international platform, the OSCE Permanent Council is not a forum for the diplomatic demonstration of threats and ultimatums in the style of a superpower when dealing with a sovereign State.

We once again call for a balanced and objective approach to the assessment of the state of affairs in Belarus and urge that the situation not be artificially inflamed. As history has shown, ultimatums, threats and sanctions merely harm the interests of all parties and do not solve existing disagreements and problems.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.