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

19 January 2012

**Regarding the parliamentary elections in Kazakhstan**

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome the successful holding of the early parliamentary elections in Kazakhstan. These elections took place at a difficult time, with the country facing a number of serious challenges.

This being so, we are pleased to note that the citizens of Kazakhstan demonstrated an active and responsible approach to the formation of the legislative branch of government in the country. The high turnout confirmed the confidence of Kazakhstan's voters in the electoral process and made it possible to objectively reflect the range of political preferences in the country. The calm atmosphere on election day is clear evidence that internal stability is being maintained in Kazakhstan.

We might mention that these parliamentary elections were held in accordance with the revised election laws, which made possible greater representation of political parties in the national parliament.

The desire of the Kazakh authorities to ensure openness, transparency and an atmosphere of trust during the elections is confirmed by the fact that a large number of international observers were invited to monitor the elections.

According to observers from the mission sent by the Commonwealth of Independent States, the elections to the *Mazhilis* (lower house of the Parliament of Kazakhstan) were "transparent and competitive and ensured the freedom of the citizens to express their will" and were also held "in accordance with national legislation and democratic norms". There was no evidence of any violations that could have had an impact on the outcome of the elections.

For their part, observers from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) also pointed to a number of positive aspects in the way the elections

were organized. However, dark tones predominate in the picture painted in the ODIHR assessment.

The continuing unsatisfactory state of affairs as regards the monitoring of elections by the OSCE compels us to return once again to the argument in favour of the need to devise a comprehensible and appropriate system for evaluating elections within our Organization. We have for a long time been calling for a more orderly approach to the subject of election monitoring. Unfortunately, however, we are faced with a stubborn unwillingness on the part of a number of our partners to change anything. As long as we do not have a uniform and agreed approach to election monitoring, we shall continue to encounter the same problems.

We should like to express the hope that the Irish Chairmanship of the OSCE will pay more attention to this question in 2012, by among other things organizing a separate event dealing with the problems involved in election monitoring.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.