



United States Mission to the OSCE

On the Parliamentary Elections in Belarus

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Harry Kamian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 21, 2019

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The United States recognizes the peaceful conduct of the November 17 parliamentary elections in Belarus and the high number of accredited local and international observers. However, election observation missions jointly concluded that “fundamental freedoms were disregarded and the integrity of the election process was not adequately safeguarded.” The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Parliamentary Assembly, and the Council of Europe’s conclusions and observations about these elections are deeply troubling. We regret that alternative voices will not be represented in parliament. In the parliamentary elections, serious questions remained with respect to obstacles to party registration, deregistration of candidates, the integrity of the early voting process, non-transparent and non-verifiable vote tabulation, non-pluralistic election commissions, criminal sanctions for defamation, and a restrictive media environment and legal environment.

We also note that there have been no meaningful changes to the electoral process as recommended by OSCE/ODIHR and the Council of Europe’s Venice Commission. We continue to encourage the Government of Belarus to undertake serious reform of its election law and processes in line with OSCE/ODIHR and Council of Europe Venice Commission recommendations. Strengthening Belarus’ democracy will reinforce Belarusian sovereignty and independence, which the United States unequivocally and firmly supports, and will pave the way to enhanced bilateral ties.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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