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**STATEMENT BY MR. DENIS SIDORENKO,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF
BELARUS TO THE OSCE, AT THE MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

17 March 2011

In response to the statement by the United States of America

Mr. Chairperson,

Once again we have listened with interest to the statement by our distinguished American partners, who, it would appear, have set themselves the goal of raising the Belarusian question at every meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council regardless of whether there are grounds for doing so or not. As always, we shall inform our government in Minsk of the points made in the statement.

By way of response and also with a view to informing the Permanent Council about the questions raised today and on earlier occasions as regards the events that took place in Minsk on 19 December 2010, we should like to make the following comments.

On 10 March 2011, a district court in Minsk passed sentence on three persons tried in connection with mass disturbances.

Dmitry Medved, a citizen of Belarus, received a three-year suspended sentence. The Russian citizens Artem Breus and Ivan Gaponov were fined. All three were released from custody in the courtroom.

The aforementioned persons were found guilty under article 293, part 2, of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus of "participation in mass disturbances accompanied by pogroms and the destruction of property". They are entitled to appeal against the verdict.

We should like to stress once more that all the actions within the framework of the legal proceedings have been carried out in full accordance with the laws of the Republic of Belarus.

At the invitation of the Belarusian authorities, experts from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) had the opportunity to observe the aforementioned judicial proceedings, which were open.

The Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is also assisting ODIHR representatives in organizing meetings with the relevant State bodies. The Belarusian authorities will continue to collaborate with the Office as regards the monitoring of judicial proceedings.

In conclusion, let me assure you once more that the Republic of Belarus takes a responsible approach to the implementation of its OSCE commitments, including those in the area of human rights, and is ready to continue its co-operation within the Organization on an entire range of issues.

At the same time, the approaches taken by some of our partners to the development of dialogue and co-operation are discouraging and cause us to wonder whether the goals and principles on which the OSCE is founded are at the root of their statements and actions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.