

The OSCE Secretariat bears no responsibility for the content of this document and circulates it without altering its content. The distribution by OSCE Conference Services of this document is without prejudice to OSCE decisions, as set out in documents agreed by OSCE participating States.

PC.DEL/1143/22
28 July 2022

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
MR. MAXIM BUYAKEVICH, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1384th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

28 July 2022

On the forced landing of Ryanair flight FR4978 in Minsk

Mr. Chairperson,

The conclusions of the final report by the working group of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) dealing with the circumstances of the forced landing of a Ryanair aircraft (flight FR4978) in Minsk on 23 May 2021 are frankly bewildering. We are witnessing some sort of absurdist play.

We recall that in January of this year, a final report on this incident was already presented by the ICAO Secretary General. Despite the politicized statements by a number of Western countries, the experts came to the conclusion that there was no forced landing of the aircraft – the latter was not escorted or intercepted by a Belarusian MiG-29 fighter jet in any way. The decision to land in Minsk was taken by the aircraft’s crew independently.

However, the politicians who had thus been caught out lying evidently did not pipe down but decided to exert pressure on the way that this topic was considered at the ICAO Council. Availing themselves of their majority there, the Western countries concerned saw to it that an additional investigation was rammed through. Their aim is obvious, namely to look for further “incriminating evidence” against the Belarusian Government and justify their unwarranted restrictive measures targeting the Belarusian aviation sector. Put simply, they demanded that the conclusions be tailored to specific political orders. It is not surprising that, as a result, a new “final” report on flight FR4978 has appeared, this time with the “right” conclusions – what is more, a report based on incomplete information and anonymous testimonies. Belarus was not even asked for additional information during the preparation of the new document. It hardly matters, though: this is not the first time that such perverse methods are applied to “undesirable” countries. We recently spoke about this at the Permanent Council.

To reiterate: we consider it utterly unacceptable to use international aviation and ICAO as tools for exerting political pressure on, or battling with, unwelcome governments. Such play-acting merely hinders the International Civil Aviation Organization from attending to its main task, which is to ensure the safety of civilian air traffic.

Thank you for your attention.