

2 October 2012

Working Session 3, 25 September 2012

Birthday Statement for Ales Bialiatski

I am Vytis Jurkonis, representing Freedom House's office in Vilnius. Recognizing the importance of humanitarian issues, and appreciating OSCE efforts on this matter, and noting that there are no boundaries for human rights issues, which are indeed transnational, I would like to address another transnational issue.

Let me remind all of you that a prominent human rights defender and friend of many here – Ales Bialiatski – is celebrating his 50th birthday today as we speak. Celebrating it in jail. Ales's arbitrary arrest in Belarus last year was a shock to us all, and we hope to see him back on the frontline of human rights defenders, contributing to events like HDIM in the nearest future.

Happy birthday, Ales!

Thank you for your attention.