

Delegation of Belarus

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALYAKSANDR SYCHOV,
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TO THE OSCE, AT THE MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

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On the presidential elections in Kazakhstan

Mr. Chairperson,

We should like to congratulate our Kazakh colleagues on the successful conduct of the early presidential elections on 3 April 2011.

The elections demonstrated the unified attitude of the Kazakh people to the future of their country and confirmed the internal stability of the State and the high level of confidence of all strata of society in the incumbent President and the course undertaken by him to strengthen the sovereignty and independence of Kazakhstan and to enhance the well-being of its citizens.

They were notable for the impressive voter turnout, which many OSCE participating States could only wish for and which clearly demonstrated the active political interest and maturity of Kazakh society and its great confidence in the elections.

We note that during the preparations and conduct of these elections the Kazakh authorities took a whole series of important measures with account taken of previous OSCE recommendations to further improve the election process, increase its transparency and establish equal conditions for all candidates, including their access to the media.

The openness of the election campaign was also demonstrated by the unprecedented number of international observers invited by Kazakhstan, who were also provided with all of the necessary conditions for them to carry out their work.

We welcome the fact that in the opinion of the majority of international observers, including those from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the elections were held in full conformity with the national electoral legislation and with due account taken of the relevant international standards. One of the key conclusions drawn by the observers was the fact that the election outcome fully reflected the will of the Kazakh people. This, in our opinion, is the major criterion for democratic elections.

We are gratified that the OSCE observers on this occasion noted the steps taken by Kazakhstan and the various improvements in the election process.

At the same time we are regrettably obliged to point out that the general tone and character of the conclusions drawn by the OSCE regarding the elections in Kazakhstan were markedly out of line with those of other international observers. We have already encountered on numerous occasions the “particular opinion” of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and its unvarying endeavour to see elections in the CIS countries in a negative light. Its “technical expertise” clearly has political overtones.

In our opinion the ODIHR’s role ends with the provision of expert assistance to participating States in improving their election processes. Its conclusions and opinions should encourage rather than discourage the efforts of participating States and should focus on the progress achieved.

We are persuaded that as long as clear and comprehensible universal criteria for assessing elections are not elaborated and adopted we shall continue to encounter double standards, and the degree of confidence in the ODIHR’s work by some participating States at least will remain at a low level. It has long been time to rectify this situation in the interests of the Organization as a whole.

In conclusion, I should like once again to congratulate our Kazakh colleagues on this important political event in their country and also to wish happiness and prosperity to our friends in Kazakhstan.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.