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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEKSANDR VOLGAREV, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1463rd MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

29 February 2024

On the elections in the Republic of Belarus

Madam Chairperson,

We welcome the successful conduct of an important domestic political event in the Republic of Belarus on 25 February this year, namely the holding of a single polling day.

We have great respect for the sovereign will of the citizens of that fraternal country, an overwhelming majority of whom came to the polling stations and cast their vote for patriotically minded deputies of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly and deputies of local councils at various levels.

We concur with the very positive assessments made by international observers regarding the organization of the elections. The missions from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and other international bodies, along with independent observers from most member countries of these organizations as well as from Bulgaria, France, Germany, Poland, Serbia, Switzerland and other countries, found the elections to have been in compliance with national legislation and international standards.

Russian citizens actively took part in the observation of the elections, both as part of the delegations of the aforementioned organizations and on a bilateral basis at the invitation of the Central Election Commission of Belarus. These missions comprised representatives of the State Duma and the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, the Russian Central Election Commission and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and also representatives of Russia's regions.

We condemn the efforts undertaken by the fugitive émigré opposition and the collective West to destabilize the situation in the country in the run-up to and during the elections. The politicized statements, devoid of any grounding in reality, made by Western officials in the wake of these elections are further evidence of the continued pursuit of blatant interference in the domestic affairs of sovereign Belarus.

As are the attempts by OSCE executive structures under their thumb – first and foremost the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights – to monitor the situation in the country as though under a magnifying glass. Such zeal might be worthy of praise, were it to be extended to all the participating States; however, that is not the case. The morbid hyperfixation with Belarus and Russia shown by OSCE functionaries and the chairpersons of subsidiary bodies of the Permanent Council who report to them takes various manifestations. These include the invitations to meetings bestowed on confrontational speakers, who engage in abstract speculations in line with the playbooks they have been provided with by their Western handlers. Such approaches are having destructive consequences for work in the human dimension and for the OSCE's work as a whole.

Madam Chairperson,

We take this opportunity to reaffirm our determination to liaise closely with the Belarusian elected representatives in the interests of further expansion of interparliamentary and interregional ties, the strengthening of the friendship and co-operation between our two brotherly peoples, and the deepening of integration within the framework of the Union State, the Eurasian Economic Union, the CSTO and the CIS.

Thank you for your attention.