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Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Belarus to the OSCE

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

7 April 2005

**OSCE/ODIHR final report on the presidential elections in the
United States of America**

Mr. Chairman,

We too have carefully studied the final report of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) observation mission on the elections held on 2 November 2004 in the United States of America, the preparation of which took an unprecedentedly long time — almost five months.

Unfortunately, the final report, just like the preliminary findings, once again clearly demonstrates the subjective nature of the ODIHR's current election monitoring activities, the detachment of the observation mission's assessments and findings from reality and also the use of "double standards" with regard to various participating States.

As we have already noted, it is difficult for us to understand the grounds for the main conclusion reached by the ODIHR mission on the basis of its observation of the elections in the United States of America, namely that "the elections mostly met the OSCE commitments included in the 1990 Copenhagen Document".

The list of numerous irregularities and problematic aspects concerning the elections, which were mentioned in the ODIHR mission's final report, is, to say the least, on a par with similar ODIHR reports on elections in a number of other countries that have, by and large, received negative assessments. Following a careful reading of the final report, it is fair to say that there were violations in the United States of America of a number of the OSCE's basic principles and commitments concerning the holding of democratic elections.

What is more, the direct violation by the United States of its obligation to put into place appropriate conditions for international and domestic election monitoring casts doubt altogether on their willingness to meet the relevant OSCE commitments.

"A long-standing democratic tradition" cannot serve here as a guarantee of compliance *a priori* with international standards.

What is also surprising is the fact that the ODIHR was able to formulate on the basis of detailed factual material just ten recommendations for the United States authorities, which were, incidentally, of a highly general nature.

All of this merely confirms our view that the ODIHR's election observation and assessment work is in need of serious improvement. We hope that this subject will receive further consideration during the forthcoming supplementary human dimension meeting on election issues.

We note and take into consideration the willingness expressed by the delegation of the United States of America to study the comments and recommendations of the ODIHR and to bear them in mind as improvements are made to the country's electoral system. At the same time, we hope that these intentions will not simply remain a declaration, but that they will also be backed up by deeds and actions.

We also hope that the ODIHR will display the same perseverance in assisting the United States of America as it does when dealing with a number of other countries, and that the ODIHR will regularly inform the OSCE participating States about this process.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.