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**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 2011

**On the burning of the Koran by an American pastor**

Mr. Chairperson,

We should like to express our full support for the statement by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan in connection with the unacceptable burning of the Koran by an American pastor and the tragic events that it provoked, including the death of United Nations staff in Afghanistan.

As was rightly stressed, it is important today not only to react to what has happened but also to forestall the possible recurrence of violence on account of intolerance and hatred – not least as the prevention of conflicts and crises is one of the OSCE's key tasks.

In view of the plans that have been announced for the repetition of such actions in the United States, we urge the Lithuanian Chairmanship and in particular the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims to take resolute steps in this regard.

The events in connection with the burning of the Koran, including the posting of a video about it on the Internet, once again demonstrate the need for an all-embracing and comprehensive approach to cyber security and freedom of expression in the new media.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.