



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION IN BELARUS

As delivered by acting permanent representative Lars Løberg
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, July 5, 2012

Mr. Chairperson,

The situation in Belarus is a cause of grave concern to Norway, and the latest developments this spring with two executions after a court case which raised a number of questions underline the seriousness of the situation. The release of a few human rights activists does not change the grim realities: a general deterioration of the human rights situation in Belarus.

The fact that Belarus refuses to give access to both OSCE and UN officials and the non-implementation of previous recommendations are unacceptable, and show the systemic nature of the human rights abuses that take place in Belarus. Belarus disregards its international obligations and even Art. 8 of its own Constitution. The Belarusian government's lack of co-operation is deplorable. We can only repeat what we have stated before: We urge the government of Belarus to address the concerns raised and to implement all its OSCE commitments.

Belarus is the only European country that continues to carry out death penalties. This practice does not bring Belarus closer to the European community of values. Norway urges the Belarusian authorities to abandon this practice immediately. It has no place in a modern European society of law.

The coming elections in Belarus will give the authorities an opportunity to renew its co-operation with international organisations and demonstrate respect for international law and obligations. We hope the authorities will take this opportunity, end its policy of self-isolation, harassment and imprisonment of its own citizens, and allow the Belarusian people to join the European family of democratic nations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.