



*Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic
to the United Nations, OSCE and other
International Organizations
in Vienna*

**Statement delivered by the Czech Republic
at the OSCE Permanent Council on May 19th, 2011
on behalf of 14 countries invoking the Moscow Mechanism**

Mr. Chairman,

The Czech Republic is delivering this statement also on behalf of the following countries: Germany, USA, Canada, Denmark, Finland, United Kingdom, Iceland, Norway, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Sweden.

The 14 participating States that invoked the Moscow Mechanism have learned with concern that Belarus did not issue a visa to the official OSCE Moscow Mechanism rapporteur Professor Emmanuel Decaux and is not cooperating with him. Such behaviour constitutes a clear breach of Belarusian commitments under the Moscow Mechanism and is in contradiction with Belarusian promises to further cooperate with the OSCE.

It is our view that a particularly serious threat to the fulfilment of the provisions of the OSCE human dimension has arisen in Belarus. We therefore called for a fact-finding mission to examine concerns regarding the demonstrations that took place in Belarus on 19 December 2010, as well as developments since then, in order to produce an independent and impartial report containing facts, proposals and advice. The recent sentencing of presidential candidate Andrey Sannikov and several other participants in the December demonstrations only confirms the urgent need for independent scrutiny of Belarusian compliance with OSCE human rights commitments.

We consider the Moscow Mechanism, which was established by consensus and in good faith by all participating States, a useful OSCE tool of cooperation and dialogue, as well as a means for clarification of possible misunderstandings. The rapporteur's report is intended to assist Belarus to meet its commitments on human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We recall that our Heads of States and Governments reconfirmed at the recent Astana summit all OSCE aquis, including the Moscow Mechanism. We therefore urge Belarus to reconsider its position, to permit Professor Decaux to visit Belarus, and to provide him with all information and assistance required to fulfil his mission.

I ask you, Mr. Chairman, to attach this statement to the Journal of the Day.

Further reaction to the Ambassador Sychov's reply

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to emphasize that the participating States which invoked the Moscow Mechanism have acted in full conformity with its provisions.

Paragraph 11 of the Mechanism stipulates that "The report containing observations of facts, proposals or advice, will be submitted to the participating State or States concerned and, unless all the States concerned agree otherwise, to the CSCE Institution no later than two weeks after the last rapporteur has been appointed."

This provision means that the States concerned can agree on different timelines of preparation and submission of the report. The 14 countries that invoked the Moscow Mechanism unanimously agreed to give the OSCE rapporteur, who began his work on May 6, until May 31 to complete his report.