

Appeal to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Participating States

ON THE NEED TO TAKE URGENT MEASURES IN CONNECTION WITH THE CRISIS WITH HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

We, representatives of civil society organizations and citizens of participating states of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE):

- Expressing our concern over credible reports of serious and widespread violations of human rights and civil liberties in Belarus after the presidential elections on December 19, 2010;
- Taking special note of the gross violations of the prohibition on inhuman treatment and torture during arrest and while being held in custody; violations of the right to due process and fair trial during investigation and court proceedings; intimidation during searches and interrogation, as well as at work and school; pressure on journalists and lawyers, as well as family members of the detained; and the confiscation of computers to paralyze the activities of nongovernmental organizations, human rights defenders and civil society activists;
- Noting that many of these violations have been directly aimed at the creation of hindrances to the activities of civil society institutions in breach of the fundamental rights to freedom of expression and freedom of association;
- Sincerely wishing to stop the persecution of civil society organizations and activists and to restore civilized dialogue between the authorities and civil society of Belarus;
- Underscoring that at the OSCE summit in Astana on December 1-2, 2010, Belarus, along with all other OSCE participating states, reaffirmed “categorically and irrevocably that the commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned”;

appeal to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe participating states to:

1. Immediately condemn the serious and widespread human rights violations in Belarus that have followed the presidential elections of December 19, 2010, and urge the authorities of Belarus to observe its OSCE human dimension commitments;
2. Urgently undertake action in response to the human rights crisis in Belarus and display a determined and persistent stance in their relationship with the authorities of Belarus;
3. Immediately begin the procedure to initiate the “Moscow Mechanism” in light of the particularly serious threat to the fulfillment of the provisions of the OSCE human dimension by the authorities of Belarus.