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Agenda item 4

Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Note verbale dated 5 July 2012 from the Permanent Mission of Belarus to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva addressed to the secretariat of the Human Rights Council

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Belarus to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the secretariat of the Human Rights Council and has the honour to enclose herewith the position of the Republic of Belarus with regard to draft resolution A/HRC/20/L.7 entitled "Situation of human rights in Belarus" (see annex).

The Permanent Mission requests that the position of the Government of Belarus be circulated as a document of the twentieth session of the Human Rights Council under agenda item 4, in all official languages of the United Nations.

** Second reissue for technical reasons on 13 November 2012.

Annex

[Original: Russian]

Statement by Mr. Mikhail Khvostov, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Belarus to the United Nations and other international organizations at Geneva, before the adoption of draft resolution A/HRC/20/L.7, “Situation of human rights in Belarus”

5 July 2012

Madam President,

Distinguished Council members,

Today the Council must take a decision that is important to its development. Not a routine resolution about a country, but a decision on which the Council and the General Assembly have taken a clear position by setting aside, in 2007, the politically motivated mandate of the special rapporteur on Belarus.

That decision was completely logical. The special rapporteur had demonstrated a lack of consistency and a determination to provoke confrontation and violent change of power within our country; he had contemptuously described the Belarusian people as having no national identity.

Today, the same group of States is again trying to foist the mandate for a special rapporteur on Belarus and the international community. The European Union's motives for doing so have nothing whatever to do with human rights. The European Union is advancing its own political agenda in the Council and forcing the High Commissioner to take action to that end. The principal purpose of the mandate as framed by the EU is deliberate anti-Government activity in Belarus under the cover of the United Nations.

The European Union, which has taken upon itself the role of champion of human rights in Belarus, is trying to make Belarus out to the Council as a special case of human rights violations. At the same time it is making no effort to improve the human rights situation in its own member States. Not a single EU representative who spoke during the interactive dialogue had the courage to say that the human rights situation in his own country had improved.

Belarus categorically rejects this draft resolution. It does not acknowledge the special rapporteur's mandate and will not work with him. We do, however, acknowledge the importance of international human rights monitoring mechanisms and will cooperate with those that work objectively, not selectively, and promote the universal values inherent in the universal periodic review.

We will continue to defend our sovereignty and our right to pursue an independent foreign policy. The Belarusian Government will continue to act in the interests of the Belarusian people, and whether that policy pleases the European Union or not is of no concern to us. We cannot be clients of EU policy; we and the EU can be partners.

The European Union loves to talk of European values but does not so much as attempt to show them in action. We do not know where those values reside: in Brussels, Warsaw or maybe Budapest. In fact, there are none: it is time to erect a monument to Lost European Values.

The fate of the Human Rights Council will be decided today. Today we decide whether, tomorrow, any Member State of the United Nations can be pressured and persecuted solely for pursuing an independent foreign policy.

Belarus calls on the Council to vote against the resolution put forward by the European Union.

Thank you.
