



## United States Mission to the OSCE

### Statement on Belarus

As delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
February 5, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States shares the concern expressed by the EU regarding the onerous tax assessed against the Belarusian Helsinki Committee. The Belarusian Helsinki Committee is a valuable member of the NGO community and the grounds for the assessment appear to threaten the international donor community's programs for Belarus. Respect for NGOs is enshrined in OSCE commitments. We are concerned this action represents another assault upon civil society in Belarus.

We would request Belarus provide more information about this development. We also look forward to a report from the OSCE Office in Minsk on this matter and reserve the right to return to this matter in the future.