



Doc. 12486

24 January 2011

Unfair presidential elections in Belarus

Reply to Written question¹: Written question No. 592 (Doc. 12457)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers is grateful to the Honourable Parliamentarian for his Written Question. It is able to bring the following substantial answer to four of the questions addressed to it:

2. On 12 January 2011, the 47 member states of the Council of Europe, sitting on the Committee of Ministers, adopted the following Declaration on the situation in Belarus:

"The worrying developments that took place in Belarus following the Presidential elections held on 19 December 2010 raise a number of questions, in particular for the Council of Europe. The Committee of Ministers asks the Belarus authorities to provide additional information on what basis the presidential candidates, journalists and human rights activists were arrested in the wake of the elections. They should be immediately released and their human rights guaranteed. Political freedoms should be fully respected.

The Committee of Ministers will continue supporting the establishment of closer relations between the Council of Europe and Belarus only on the basis of respect for European values and principles."

3. In line with this declaration, the Committee of Ministers intends to continue, and if possible strengthen, its co-operation activities with civil society, including independent media, in Belarus. The relations with the authorities of that country will be guided by the follow-up they will give to the statement of the Committee of Ministers, in particular regarding the immediate release of the presidential candidates, journalists and human rights activists arrested in the wake of the elections.

4. As far as the question on visa is concerned, the Committee of Ministers notes that the right to decide on the entry and stay of foreigners on the territory of member states does not fall within the Council of Europe's field of competence.

1. adopted at the 1103rd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (19-20 January 2011)

