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Unfair presidential elections in Belarus

Written question No. 592 to the Committee of Ministers

by Mr Pieter OMTZIGT, Netherlands, Group of the European People's Party

The presidential elections in Belarus on 19 December 2010 were unfair and many irregularities took place according to the OSCE observer mission: the incumbent president had 90% of air-time on national television, the central electoral commission lacks impartiality and there is a lack of safeguards to ensure the integrity of early voting and the vote count.

Since gaining independence in 1994 no free and fair elections have been held in Belarus and the current regime has shown that it does not intend to ever hold any. The day after the elections several candidates were imprisoned. Journalists were also harassed and imprisoned as well as human rights activists.

Mr Omtzigt,

To ask the Committee of Ministers:

- Does the Committee of Ministers agree that the imprisoned candidates are political prisoners or does it trust the impartiality of the Belarus judicial system?
- Will the Committee of Ministers discuss and implement a visa ban on Belarus officials as long as presidential candidates are in prison?
- Will the Committee of Ministers release an official statement expressing its disapproval of the current political situation in Belarus?
- Will the Council of Europe now formally make contact with the opposition as legitimate representatives of the Belarus people?
- Can the Committee of Ministers answer these questions before the opening of the Parliamentary Assembly's first part-session of 2011?

