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I. SESSION I

1. The first session was opened with an introductory speech by **Antanas Valionis**, member of the Seimas, the Lithuanian parliament, and former Minister of Foreign Affairs. **Juozas Olekas**, current Minister of Defense, also greeted the participants. German parliamentarian, **Karl Lamers**, thanked the Lithuanian Seimas for hosting the seminar and thereby proving once again its support to democratic reforms in Belarus. Mr Lamers mentioned that since 2001 the Assembly has invited representatives of the Belarusian democratic opposition to its meetings. For over a year, based on the decision of the Assembly's Standing Committee, the International Secretariat hosted an activist from Belarus, Ms. Olga Stuzhinskaya, who in autumn 2006 secured funds for opening of the Brussels-based Office for a Democratic Belarus.

2. **Ales Mikhalevich**, vice-chairman of the Belarusian Popular Front (BPF), opened the first panel. Mikhalevich talked about political developments in Belarus since 1994, the year Lukashenka was elected the president of Belarus. When elaborating on the 2006 elections, the opposition leader said that pro-democratic political parties were weaker than during the 2001 presidential elections. This is due to the total absence of independent media, the closure of non-governmental organizations and the discrediting picture of the pro-democratic forces constantly presented to the voters by state propaganda. Despite these difficulties, however, the pro-democratically oriented parties and NGOs managed to unite into one coalition and present a presidential candidate, Aliaksandr Milinkevich. The positive image of Mr. Milinkevich played an important role in attracting broad popular support. The opposition's after-election strategy, according to the speaker, should include further promotion of Milinkevich and the creation of a broad movement "For Freedom", increasing support to the civil society and the independent media. As for international assistance, Mikhalevich mentioned youth exchange programs and the opening of some instruments of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) for Belarus. He also asked for international solidarity with the repressed people in Belarus. The BNF leader also emphasized the political significance of efforts designed to promote the culture of Belarus. Establishment of analytical institutes and cooperation with the Belarusian diaspora must be on the agenda as well.

3. During the Q&A period, **Bart von Winsen** from the Netherlands asked what the strategy of the opposition for the local elections in January 2007 is and if Milinkevich is going to support local candidates. The response of the speaker was that Milinkevich is personally involved in supporting each candidate. **Yaroslau Ramanchuk** from the United Civil Party of Belarus disagreed with the statement of Mikhalevich and denounced Milinkevich as the current leader of the unified opposition. He accused the former presidential candidate of ignoring other political parties when forming the movement "For Freedom". **Uladzimir Nistyuk** of the Belarusian Social-Democratic Party (Hramada) proposed adopting a statement on the jailed Aliaksandr Kazulin, leader of the BSDP (H) and another former candidate for the presidential elections.

4. In his presentation on the economic situation in Belarus **Yaroslav Romanchuk** described the economy of Belarus as centrally planned with controlled prices, severely restricted property rights, regulated degree of competition, dominance of the state in the financial market, severe regulation costs, profits and sales of enterprises, and aggressive protectionism (even against Russia). According to the expert, the roots of the today's relative stability in Belarus are oil, gas and energy subsidies from Russia that constitute about 13 per cent of the Belarusian GDP. Plus, favorable external demand for fertilizers, metals, chemicals and transport contribute to the stability. Among other reasons are soft monetary policy, coincidence of Soviet production and external demand in 2002-2006, trust in the national banking system, low expectations of the population and an informational vacuum. Mr Romanchuk also named possible risks and challenges the Belarusian economy might face in the near future. According to him, factors such as the possible rise of gas

prices and the fall of prices for chemicals and fertilizers might have influence. Terms of trade with Russia, growth of budget liability, shrinking tax base, accumulation of debts and bad investment, inflationary pressure and some other challenges were also listed by Mr Romanchuk.

5. Bart von Winsen asked the expert if there is any FDI going into Belarus from the West and what the climate for investment is in general. The response was that big business is basically not allowed into the country, or if so it has to share profits with the administration. Only those small businesses which managed to establish good “working” relations with the government are prospering.

6. **Zhanna Litvina**, head of the Belarusian Association of Journalists, explained the grave situation of the remaining independent media in the country. Belarus is one of 10 countries in the world with the strictest censorship. Persecution and pressure upon independent mass media from official authorities visibly increased in 2006. The pressure on the independent press became especially strong close to March President Elections and after it. Authorities arrested scores of domestic and foreign journalists, who were trying to cover the election campaign and the subsequent protests in the capital. For months before the elections, the Lukashenka administration practically disabled independent and oppositional mass media of the possibility to report news and comments to their audience. The state mail service refused to deliver newspapers, which criticized the authorities; the state agency on press distribution refused to sell such newspapers in newsstands; printing houses refused to these publications under authority pressure, and border guards have taken away the whole print run of editions, who, evading the ban, were printed abroad.

7. Mrs Litvina called the state-owned media one of the means of survival for the current government and one of the main sectors in the propaganda structure. According to her, thanks almost total information vacuum in Belarus, about a half of the population is not aware of such facts as political disappearance or imprisonment of the ex-candidate for presidential elections, Aliaksandr Kazulin. When talking about possible support from the international community, Mrs Litvina said it is important to save the remaining newspapers, provide more support to internet-based outlets, improve and widen broadcasting of the new external radio projects.

8. Minsk’s security and defence strategy were presented by **Dzyanis Melyantsou**, analyst of the Center for European Integration Problems. Basic geopolitical discourses of Belarus today include, he said, the following points: independence from the East and West; presentation of Belarus as a center of Eastern-Slavonic civilization; and Belarus as a “transit bridge” between East and West. According to the official defence and security line, Belarus protects the EU from transnational threats, and protects Russia from the West while simultaneously being the leader of the Belarus-Russia Union and an active participant in the Non-Aligned Movement. The National Security Concept, according to official sources can be characterized as democratic, peace-loving and Russia-oriented, Melyantsou said. He informed the audience that the current government sees Belarus today becoming an object of political pressure from the side of the United States and other NATO members, which supposedly help “internal destructive forces to destabilize social and political situation in the country in order to change violently the constitutional order”.

9. The main principles of Belarusian military policy, explained Melyantsou, include such commonly recognized values as the inviolability of state borders and the absence of territorial claims, political independence and state sovereignty of other countries, and reduction of armaments on the European continent. One of the principles is that not a single state is considered as a potential enemy.

10. On relations with Russia, the National Security Concept says that “the most important factor of external security is the union with Russia”. The legal basis for Belarus-Russia cooperation, the expert described, includes agreements on military cooperation and joint use of military assets, joint

defence policy concept and a security concept of the Union, as well as a military doctrine of the Union and a Collective Security Treaty. There are two Russian military objects on the territory of Belarus: a radar station in Volga of the anti-missile early warning system and a communication center "Anthey" in Vileika.

11. Another priority of the Belarusian foreign and security policy includes cooperation with China, Iran, Venezuela and Cuba. Relations with NATO Mr Melyantsou described by quoting President Lukashenka: "The border between different politico-military organizations should be not a line of confrontation, but a line of good neighbourhood. Moreover, there are a lot of common problems, challenges and tasks... Therefore cooperation between Belarus and NATO is not just theoretically possible, but is necessary and mutually beneficial". This statement clearly shows that Belarus tries to save its relations with NATO in order to avoid full isolation in case of the worsening of the Belarus-Russia relations.

12. Other conclusions that can be made from the presentation of Mr Melyantsou are that Russia remains the main guarantor of the Belarus security; Belarus makes attempts to find other footholds in foreign and security policy; Belarus does not pose a military threat to neighbouring countries.

13. **Andres Herkel**, chairman of the sub-committee on Belarus in the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, spoke about his experience as observer during the last presidential election in Belarus and the impressive level of fraud, repression and lack of transparency he saw. The Council of Europe started its official relations with Belarus in 1992 and the guest status was suspended in 1997 after the first referendum on a longer term in office for the president. PACE issued two very important reports in 2004—on disappeared people and on freedom of media. Since then, the special Rapporteur of the organization has been denied access to the country.

14. Mr Herkel supported the view of **Dr. Evgenij Volk**, Head of the Heritage Foundation Moscow Office, that Russia is the key player in solving the Belarusian problem. He also, to a certain degree, supported the opinion of the Ukrainian expert and his comparison of Belarus with the situation in Azerbaijan. However, Herkel stressed, the situation in Belarus is much worse. For example, one of the big differences is the existence of some independent newspapers.

15. As for some possible actions that international organizations could undertake to improve the situation, the expert was quite pessimistic, saying that there is not much organizations like PACE can offer apart from resolutions and statements. At least, he said, hopefully the special rapporteur will be able to visit the country at some point and get objective and detailed information. One thing is clear, the Estonian parliamentarian concluded, the struggle is continuing in very difficult circumstances.

II. SESSION II

16. The second session of our seminar focused on international dimension of the issue. The chair of this session, **Rasa Juknevičienė**, Deputy Head of the Lithuanian delegation to the NATO PA, noted that developments in Belarus continue to be the subject of grave concern among members of the international community, which on many occasions has condemned the abuse of power by Mr Lukashenka and his circles. Unfortunately, the unwillingness of the Belarusian government to comply with recommendations of the international community and the steadily deteriorating human rights situation in Belarus once again underline the regime's refusal to cooperate.

17. The second session was divided into two panel discussions, focusing on the role of neighbouring countries and the contribution of the international organisations, respectively.

A. PANEL I

18. In the first panel, three experts discussed the perspectives of three of Belarus' neighbours: Lithuania, Russia and Ukraine.

19. The Lithuanian speaker, **Kristina Vaiciunaite**, Director, Eastern Europe Studies Center, named the main factors that serve in favour of Mr. Lukashenka: the punitive and isolationist policy of the EU, the artificially stable economy, weak opposition, regime-dependent media and disorganised civil society. While clearly acknowledging the regime's crimes against the Belarusian people, it is still worthwhile to maintain dialogue with different political levels of Belarus authorities (and Lithuania might be the lead country in this respect), perhaps avoiding direct contacts with Mr. Lukashenka personally. After all, Ms. Vaiciunaite noted, the international community negotiates terms of nuclear non-proliferation with the leaders of Iran or North Korea. In the case of Belarus, the themes of a dialogue could include the transit of natural gas, communication systems, arms control, environmental issues, the fight against terror, etc.

20. Ms. Vaiciunaite stressed the need to lower visa prices for the citizens of Belarus, thus enabling more Belarusians to travel to EU countries and to receive a different picture of the EU than that given by the official Minsk propaganda. It is also necessary to increase the visibility of Belarus in the EU, because often knowledge of Belarus issues among Europeans is much poorer than one could expect.

21. Doubtlessly, Russia is the key neighbour of Belarus. Dr. Yevgenyi Volk, regretted that too many misconceptions and stereotypes still exist in Russia with regard to the West and to Belarus. In the Soviet era, the myth was created of Russia being a 'big brother' for Belarus, and this perception is still strongly rooted in minds of both Russians and Belarusians. It largely explains the way Russia continues to support the current regime in Minsk: while despising Mr. Lukashenka's methods, many Russians tend to agree with what he is trying to achieve. Mr. Lukashenka is "socially close" to ordinary Russians, while Mr. Saakashvili, for example, is "socially distant". Thus, the democratisation of Russia is a prerequisite for democratisation of Belarus.

22. In addition to these psychological considerations, Belarus is important for the Kremlin military. The military co-operation of the two countries is particularly robust, as clearly demonstrated by the recent military exercise United Security-2006. This vast exercise was openly anti-West, indicating that NATO is still considered as a potential enemy. Further elaborating on the motives behind Moscow's support to Mr. Lukashenka Dr. Volk asserted that economically Belarus is of little interest to Russia. However, owing to the fact that no customs exist between the two countries, influential Russian oligarchs use Belarus as a 'black hole' for their obscure financial operations.

23. Modelling future scenarios, Dr. Volk believed it was hardly possible that the two countries either completely merge into one state or completely split, with Mr. Lukashenka turning to the West. One can probably expect further half-hearted movement with many controversies and pullbacks: "two steps forward, two steps back", as Dr. Volk put it. The speaker personally regretted Russia's policy to support the Belarusian dictator, calling it a "doomed policy".

24. In his presentation, **Oleh Soskin**, Director of Institute of Society Transformation and the former Advisor to the President of Ukraine, stated that Ukraine is an extremely important partner of Belarus in political and socio-economic terms. Ukraine and Belarus share a common border

(the demarcation of which is yet to be endorsed by the Belarusian side), their transport infrastructures are tightly inter-connected and they both suffered from the Chernobyl disaster. Moreover, the two nations are very close in history, culture, and language. All these factors predetermine Ukraine's position towards its northern neighbour: on the one hand, Kyiv joins the Western countries in condemning the anti-democratic nature of the Belarusian regime, but on the other hand, Ukraine has to maintain dialogue and co-operation with this country and its president, who is in control of the situation in Belarus and has the support of a large part of the Belarusian population.

25. Mr. Soskin noted that the political relations between the two countries were considerably more dynamic under President Kuchma, whose meetings with Mr. Lukashenka took place on a regular basis. Mr. Yushchenko appears to be much more reluctant to establish close ties with his Belarusian counterpart than his predecessor. Contrary to what one could expect, the co-operation on prime ministerial level is virtually non-existent as well. Mr. Soskin pointed out that this political chill is inconsistent with flourishing economic co-operation between Belarus and Ukraine. He further stressed that the expected rise in Russian natural gas prices will result in serious deterioration of Russian-Belarusian relations. The West should ask itself how best to use this situation to achieve the goal of the democratisation of Belarus. As for Ukraine, he outlined three possible options:

1. The 'Conflict' option: Ukraine, together with the EU, suspends all political and economic relations with Belarus and uses all available means to support Belarusian opposition. Consequently, Mr. Lukashenka would have no other choice but to seek Russia's patronage and to sacrifice Belarus' sovereignty.
2. The 'Passive' option: Ukraine refrains from any systematic actions on a state level. While formally supporting the EU's position on Belarus, Ukraine allows economic co-operation to blossom with this country. It is impossible to predict where such policy lead, as the outcome will depend on incidental factors.
3. The 'Creative' option: Ukraine, together with Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, and supported by the EU, establish a mechanism of an intensive dialogue with Belarus, including a presidential 'round table' with Mr. Lukashenka aiming to "start working with" the Belarusian President, persuading him to liberalise the political system in return for practical co-operation projects. In addition, Ukraine, Belarus, Poland and Slovakia would launch a joint consortium to transport natural gas, thereby ensuring alternative energy supply for themselves and for the EU. Belarus should also be included in the Baltic-Black-Caspian Sea partnership.

26. Mr. Soskin favoured the third option, which, he believed, would preserve the sovereignty of Belarus and would provide the international community with a tool to influence democratisation processes in Belarus.

27. In the ensuing discussions, Mr. Nistiuk said that it is impossible for opposition candidates to carry out a visible election campaign due to the virtual absence of financial resources. The Belarusian opposition receives very little or no support from the international community in this respect. Mr. Soskin replied that the Ukrainian democratic candidates were not financed by the West either but managed to win the elections nonetheless. He urged the Belarusian opposition to show more resolve and, first of all, to develop a joint strategic vision for Belarus. He also underlined the importance of the upcoming municipal elections in Belarus, stating that the success of the Ukrainian democratic forces would not have been possible without strong positions in local authorities.

28. **Lord Sewel** (UK) and **Jorge Neto** (Portugal) shared the views of Dr. Volk that Russia, and not the EU or NATO, is the key player when it comes to the question of influencing processes in

Belarus. Mr. Neto stressed that Mr. Putin's administration is openly using its vast energy resources to exert political pressure on its neighbouring countries.

B. PANEL II

29. The second panel dealt with Belarus-EU relations as well as the role of NATO.

30. **Jean Eric Holzapfel**, co-ordinator for Belarus of the Delegation of the European Commission to Ukraine and Belarus introduced a short history of the EU position on Belarus as of 1996, after the flawed referendum on changes to the Belarusian Constitution and the Union's response establishing a new policy framework regarding this country. The following EU positions were, according to speaker, reactions to different events, such as irregular elections, reports of international organizations, facts of political prosecution and others. The EU has adjusted its policy in light of the March 2006 elections by placing visa bans and introducing assets freezes, which targeted individuals responsible for flawed elections and mass repression—including Mr Lukashenka. In several declarations, Holzapfel noted, the EU Presidency, however, reminded the authorities and the citizens of Belarus that the door remains open and the Union would like to develop its relations with Belarus provided that the authorities prove a sincere willingness to respect human rights, the rule of law, democratic values and initiate reforms.

31. The EU policy on Belarus has several dimensions, Holzapfel explained: a political dimension through political positions and actions; trade; and cooperation as one of the EU external assistance recipients. The cooperation policy has a double-track approach whereby its tough attitude towards these responsible for human rights violations in Belarusian government is balanced by active engagement with the civil society.

32. The co-ordinator for Belarus continued by discussing the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), which covers Belarus. No action plan for Belarus is foreseen. However, he said the European Commission is currently working on an informal one, which could explain to the Belarusian population what it would gain from a rapprochement with the EU. In trade issues, he said, the Union is currently discussing withdrawal of Belarus from the benefits of the General System of Preferences (GSP).

33. Holzapfel mentioned such obstacles in implementation of the above mentioned framework, as refusal of the Belarusian authorities to open a Commission Delegation in Minsk; the blockade and delays of some Tacis programmes; and projects implemented by NGOs blocked by the regime. In order to tackle these problems, Commission complements Tacis with the EIDHR and Decentralized Cooperation programmes. However, the Belarusian legislation on NGO registration, Holzapfel said, can effectively block most of the activities to be carried out inside the country. Two new projects are aimed at addressing the difficult situation of media in Belarus: the two year project led by Media Consulta, which covers radio and TV broadcast, internet, support to some written press and training of journalists. The second program is aimed at assisting students potentially sanctioned by the regime.

34. In his concluding words, the Commission representative underlined that the major key factor for change in Belarus-EU relations would be political change in Belarus. Until that, it is important to inform the people of Belarus about the EU and what it can offer in the framework of its neighbourhood policy.

35. **Laurie Walker**, desk officer for Belarus at NATO, informed participants of the seminar about relations between the Alliance and Belarus through the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program in the political framework of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership. Belarus submitted its presentation document

for participation in PfP in 1996, he said, but at the end of March 1999 Belarus suspended its cooperation with the Alliance to protest against NATO military operation in Yugoslavia. The decision of President Lukashenka to restore relations with NATO at the end of August 1999 resumed the country's membership in Partnership for Peace in autumn 1999. He expressed his approval of the draft Individual Partnership Program of Belarus with NATO for 2000-2001 which in July 1999 was approved of by NATO North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC). On 30 July 2000 this document came into effect. Main areas for cooperation are emergency situations, civil defense, development of defense policy and strategies, medical service, language training and military training are viewed.

36. Laurie Walker informed the audience about several statements made by the NATO Secretary General and the North Atlantic Council condemning the results of the rigged presidential election in March 2006. Events of the spring 2006 in Minsk marked the beginning of the review of Belarus-NATO relations. Allied conclusions included sending clear and politically critical statements to the government of Belarus. The organization decided, however, that cutting all ties and stopping cooperation would be counterproductive. To implement the review, elaborated Mr Walker, the Alliance decided to concentrate on public political criticism and frank exchanges within the EAPC framework. NATO's conclusions were to continue with the Individual Partnership Programme and cooperation in the area of landmine destruction.

III. SESSION III

37. Under the chairmanship of **Jose Lello**, Vice-President of the NATO PA, the participants proceeded with the third and the last session of the seminar. The idea of this session was to give an opportunity to a number of independent experts on Belarus to analyse and sum up what was said by the Belarusian and international speakers on the first two sessions of the seminar as well as to allow other participants to present their ideas and views on the prospects of democratisation in Belarus and what would be the most efficient strategy to achieve this objective.

38. **Pawel Kazanecki**, chairman of the East European Democratic Centre, Poland, discussed the effectiveness of the EU instruments with regard to Belarus. He regretted that the implementation of TACIS programmes was hampered by bureaucracy, delays and the lack of enthusiasm. These programmes failed to reach the 'right people', largely because all projects had to be approved by the Belarusian government. The programmes are not adapted to local conditions. Mr. Kazanecki also noted that, while the European Commission made decisions to endorse TV and radio projects designed to provide alternative information for Belarusians, these decisions are somewhat controversial as the implementation of the projects was largely entrusted to a Russian media company. The EU procedures are also not flexible enough to provide direct assistance to oppressed NGOs and other opposition organisations. Therefore, he backed the idea of working out a completely new EU instrument, run by impartial professionals and tasked to elaborate a comprehensive long-term strategy towards Belarus.

39. At present, Mr. Kazanecki asserted, the EU is more concerned about its own security than the lack of democracy in Belarus. The West is prepared to tolerate the Lukashenka regime as long as it guarantees stability in the region and ensures proper border protection to prevent illegal migration and illicit trafficking of drugs, arms and humans.

40. In her rather provocative presentation, **Rimante Budryte**, an independent Lithuanian analyst from the Centre for Strategic Studies, essentially agreed that the latter assessment can be applied to Lithuania's approach towards Belarus. She underlined that, as far as Lithuania's national interests are concerned, the question of maintaining Belarus' independence from Russia is more

important than the human rights situation in this country. Ms. Budryte claimed that Mr. Lukashenka is not, in fact, an aggressive neighbour and Lithuania does not sense any threat from him. The security situation for Lithuania, however, would change dramatically should Belarus become a part of Russian Federation. Therefore, as long as Mr. Lukashenka resists unification plans with Russia, albeit for completely different reasons, his regime is acceptable for Lithuania. She also suggested putting more focus on the programmes designed to promote national language and strengthen Belarusian national identity, thereby supporting Belarusian statehood.

41. **Balazs Jarabik**, political analyst from Slovakia, insisted that it is possible for the international community to induce Minsk to change its politics. Currently, the regime is at a turning point. In light of foreseeable disagreements between Russia and Belarus over natural gas and oil prices, Mr. Lukashenka finds himself in uncertainty and is, therefore, in need of other options for co-operation. Europe should use this opportune moment to exert pressure on official Minsk, insisting on democratic change in the country. Unfortunately, Mr. Jarabik pointed out, the EU does not seem to have a solid strategy towards Belarus. For example, some Central and Eastern European countries of the EU refuse to support the proposal to expelling Belarus from the EU's Generalised System of Preferences on trade, thus sending a wrong signal to Mr. Lukashenka. Mr. Jarabik stressed that "tough" language was the only one the Belarusian dictator understands.

42. The ensuing discussions reflected evident disagreements among the participants of the seminar along the lines of the classical "engagement vs. sanctions" dilemma. Mr. Soskin passionately argued, referring to the experience of his own country, Ukraine, that the "tough" stance on Belarus will only result in Mr. Lukashenka's rapprochement with Moscow. Mr. Nistiuk also advocated the "pro-engagement" and suggested re-launching inter-parliamentary co-operation projects, such as joint visits to Belarus by representatives of different European parliamentary assemblies. However, David Hobbs, NATO PA Deputy Secretary General, pointed out that such visits might be easily misinterpreted by the Belarusian authorities, while Mr. Jarabik stressed that it is impossible to imagine democratically-elected European bodies establishing relations with puppet Belarusian legislators.

43. Mr. Nistiuk also strongly opposed the idea of economic sanctions against Belarus, noting that such sanctions would only hurt ordinary people. Yet Mr. Anatolyi Lebedko, one of the most prominent leaders of the Belarusian opposition, observed that the EU possesses an effective tool to influence Mr. Lukashenka since more than 50% of Belarus' trade goes to the EU. Prof. Vytautas Landsbergis, MEP and the former head of the Lithuanian state, backed Mr. Lebedka's arguments by quoting famous Russian dissident Anatolyi Sakharov, who was brave enough to urge the Western democracies to press his own country in order to undermine the totalitarian Soviet system.

44. The discussions also demonstrated the lack of unity among the members of the Belarusian democratic opposition. Representatives of the Social-Democratic Party (Hramada) and the United Civic Party of Belarus refused to regard Mr. Alexander Milinkevich as the leader of the opposition. The evident disagreements within the opposition led some of the seminar's participants to express their disappointment in Belarusian democratic forces. Mr. Kazanecki asserted that the Belarusian opposition is politically bankrupt. Its only visible achievement in recent years was the election and promotion of Mr. Milinkevich who has become an internationally recognised symbol of the Belarusian democracy. However, even this achievement is currently being compromised.

45. Mr. Soskin, Prof. Landsbergis and other participants criticised the Belarusian opposition for failing to develop a single, comprehensive doctrine and vision of the future of the country, and thus present an attractive alternative to 'lukashism'. Mr. Soskin argued that Ukrainian democrats, while finding themselves in just as difficult situation as their Belarusian colleagues, managed to work out such a vision for their country, and that was largely the key to the success of the Orange Revolution. He challenged the Belarusian opposition to do likewise.

46. On the other hand, it was clearly acknowledged that the environment for opposition activity is extremely hostile, and that tribute must be paid to those democrats who dared to oppose the regime, risking their jobs, freedom or even their lives.
