



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 920 Vienna, 12 July 2012

EU statement on Belarus

The European Union would like to express its deep regret and great disappointment that Belarusian civil society representative Viktor Kornienko has been denied the right to travel to Vienna to attend the OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Democratic Elections and Election Observation, to be held in Vienna on 12 and 13 July 2012.

We understand that Mr Kornienko, Co-chair of the initiative “For Fair Elections”, who is registered to participate in the above meeting, was prevented today from travelling to Vienna by the Belarusian authorities.

We would like to recall OSCE commitments regarding the freedom of movement, which state that “participating States will respect fully the right of everyone to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State, and to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country”. We also recall that participating States are urged to fully respect their obligations under international law in this regard and that any restrictions on the freedom of movement will have the character of very rare exceptions.

We urge the Belarusian authorities to reverse this decision as soon as possible.

The Acceding Country Croatia*, the Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro* and Iceland+, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

* Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.