

**Spanish Presidency of the European Union****OSCE Permanent Council No. 804**  
**Vienna, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2010****High Representative's Declaration on behalf of the EU on the situation in Belarus**

---

The European Union would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the “High Representative's Declaration on behalf of the EU on the situation in Belarus” as issued on 31 March 2010, which includes the list of countries that aligned themselves with the declaration in Brussels:

“The European Union expresses grave concern over the recent harassment of representatives of independent media, civil society and opposition organisations, including restrictions on the freedom of assembly, association and expression, as well as regrets continued difficulties with the registration of NGOs and opposition parties. EU urges Belarus to address the concerns regarding the democracy and the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the country.

The current trends are particularly worrisome in the run up to the 25 April local elections. The European Union attaches great importance to their good conduct and expects that the Belarusian authorities do their utmost to ensure the necessary environment for democratic elections that meet OSCE and other international standards. It regrets that the way of setting up local

election commissions raises questions on adequate representation of democratic and independent NGOs. The European Union will follow closely the conduct of the local elections.

Recalling its firm opposition to the death penalty, the European Union deplores the reported execution of two men carried out in Minsk. EU urges the Belarusian authorities to release complete information on the matter. Belarus is the only country in Europe which still applies capital punishment. The EU calls on Belarus to establish an immediate moratorium on the use of the death penalty with a view to its abolition.

The European Union recalls its policy of engagement towards Belarus, including in the context of the Eastern Partnership. It reiterates that its readiness to further deepen relations with Belarus will depend on concrete steps in Belarus towards democracy, human rights and the rule of law. EU remains ready to assist Belarus in attaining these objectives.

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

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