



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1384 Vienna, 28 July 2022

EU statement on the forced landing of Ryanair Flight FR4978 in Minsk on 23 May 2021

1. On 19 July 2022, the ICAO Council completed its discussions on the matter of Ryanair Flight FR4978. It concluded that the Government of Belarus has committed an act of unlawful interference in breach of international aviation law concerning the forced landing of Ryanair Flight FR4978 in Minsk on 23 May 2021. The ICAO Council condemned this unlawful interference.
2. The condemnation was based on a detailed and thorough Fact-finding investigation report prepared by the ICAO Secretariat, which included an interview and audio recordings from the Minsk air traffic controller involved in the incident. The report confirms that the bomb threat against Ryanair Flight FR4978 was deliberately false, that senior government officials of Belarus were involved and provided instructions to force the landing in Minsk and that the incident endangered the safety of the flight and its passengers.
3. The report therefore confirmed what the EU had already established - that the Belarusian regime orchestrated the forced landing of a civilian plane for the sole purpose of arresting the opposition journalist Roman Pratasevich and his friend Sofia Sapega in a flagrant violation of international air law, and in doing so threatened the safety and security of international civil aviation.
4. On 4 June 2021, the EU and its Member States, together with other international partners, took measures in response to this serious and irresponsible act, banning Belarusian carriers from European airspace and airports. On 21 June 2021, the EU adopted sanctions against the individuals and entities involved in the forced landing

of the Ryanair aircraft. A substantial package of sectoral measures was also adopted on 24 June 2021 in this context.

5. The EU welcomes the fact that the report will be conveyed to all ICAO Member States and that the infractions of the Chicago Convention by Belarus will be reported to the ICAO Assembly during its upcoming 41st Session (27 Sept. – 7 Oct. 2022). The report will also be forwarded to Secretary-General of United Nations for appropriate further action.
6. In the meantime, the EU continues its decisive action to support democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms and increasing support to the Belarusian people and civil society. We also deplore the regime's continuous blatant disrespect of human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Belarusian people and recall the conclusions and recommendations of the Vienna and Moscow Mechanisms in this regard. The ongoing repression must stop, and all political prisoners must be released immediately and unconditionally. Belarus must stop enabling Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and live up to its international obligations and commitments, including those undertaken within the OSCE, in their letter and spirit.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE and REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, as well as the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.