



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 901 Vienna, 09 February 2012

EU statement on Belarus

The European Union is deeply concerned about reports of continued mistreatment of political prisoners in Belarus, including the use of torture or other cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment. In particular, the EU is concerned about the conditions of imprisonment and ill-treatment of Mikalay Autukovich, Dzmitry Bandarenka, Dzmitry Dashkevich, Siarhei Kavalenka, Andrei Sannikau and Mikalay Statkevich. The EU is also concerned about reports that they were denied access to their lawyers and family members.

Regarding Mr Andrei Sannikau, the EU notes that the UN rapporteur on torture has been requested to investigate the allegations that Mr Sannikau has been tortured while serving prison sentence. We call on Belarus to fully cooperate with the UN rapporteur in this matter.

Furthermore, the EU calls on the Belarusian authorities to observe international law and its OSCE commitments, and ensure that all individuals in detention or incarceration are treated with humanity and respect for the inherent dignity of the human person. The EU also calls on the Belarusian authorities to take effective legislative, administrative, judicial and other measures to prevent torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of prisoners and punish those responsible for human rights violations.

The EU has taken note of the recently released Final Human Rights Assessment of the Events of 19 December 2010 in Minsk, prepared by Mr Neil Jarman, the Special Rapporteur appointed by a group of 40 NGOs called “the Committee on International Control over the Human Rights Situation in Belarus”. The report highlights a number of concerns about the abuse of human rights and violation of international standards, and points to a failure by the Belarusian authorities to investigate a number of complaints of mistreatment and physical abuse of detainees. The report concludes that the detentions and prosecutions, and the ongoing harassment of Belarusian civil society, appear to be an attempt to repress political opposition and deter others who might protest against the regime.

The EU notes that the conclusions of Mr Jarman’s report reinforce the findings of the report prepared last year by Prof. Emmanuel Decaux, the OSCE Moscow Mechanism Rapporteur. The EU reiterates its call on the Belarusian authorities to utilise fully both reports and to take immediate steps to implement the recommendations contained therein.

Finally, the EU reiterates its call on the Belarusian authorities to immediately release and rehabilitate all political prisoners.

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 countries ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA and SERBIA, the European Free Trade Association country NORWAY, member 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 EFTA and the European Economic Area.