



## **EUROPEAN UNION**

### **OSCE Permanent Council Nr 908 Vienna, 19 April 2012**

#### **EU Statement on the release of Belarusian former Presidential candidate Andrei Sannikaw as well as Dzmitry Bandarenka**

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The European Union would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the statement by High Representative Catherine Ashton on the release of Belarusian former Presidential candidate Andrei Sannikaw as well as Dzmitry Bandarenka, issued on 15 April 2012 in Brussels:

"I welcome the news that former Presidential candidate Andrei Sannikaw as well as his main campaign aide Dzmitry Bandarenka are now free and will be able to rejoin their families and friends.

Andrei Sannikaw and Dzmitry Bandarenka stand out as prominent symbols for the tireless work and commitment of many for a democratic and European Belarus. They were sentenced on political grounds in May last year in the aftermath of the 19 December 2010 presidential elections, in which Andrei Sannikaw ran as a candidate.

I call on the authorities of Belarus to release unconditionally now also all other remaining political prisoners and to remove all restrictions on the enjoyment of

their civil and political rights. This would certainly contribute to possibilities for moving towards improved relations between the EU and Belarus."