



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1001 Vienna, 22 May 2014

EU Statement on the Arbitrary Detention of More than 30 Civil Society and Political Activists in Belarus

The European Union would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the statement of the EU High Representative on 16 May 2014 concerning the arbitrary detention of more than 30 civil society and political activists in Belarus, in which the following remarks were made.

The European Union is concerned about the harassment, arbitrary arrest and detention of several dozens of representatives of civil society and opposition organisations in the run up to, and at the beginning of the World Ice Hockey Championship in Belarus. We condemn the use of administrative detention by the Belarusian authorities as an instrument aimed at creating pressure, fear and uncertainty among the young generation of people in Belarus.

We urge the authorities of Belarus to immediately stop these actions and to release all those unjustly detained, dropping all charges against them. We also reiterate our call for the immediate and unconditional release and rehabilitation of all political prisoners.

The EU's readiness to further develop relations with Belarus remains conditional on concrete steps in Belarus towards democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ and SERBIA*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidates ALBANIA and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia 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.