



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 864
Vienna, 2 June 2011**

EU statement on Belarus

The EU would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on Belarus, issued on 26 May 2011 and distributed as an OSCE document under the reference number SEC.DEL/201/11, in which she stated:

“I deeply regret today’s harsh sentences against the Belarusian ex-Presidential candidates Mikalay Statkevich and Dzmitry Uss. These politically motivated sentences are yet another step backwards as regards Belarus’ respect for human rights, the rule of law and democratic principles.

I call upon Belarus to stop the ongoing crackdown on the political opposition, civil society and the independent media. I consider the presence of political prisoners in the heart of Europe in the 21st century unacceptable, and call for their immediate release and rehabilitation.”

The candidate countries CROATIA*, the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ICELAND**, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate 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 the EFTA and the European Economic Area.