



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 855
Vienna, 24 March 2011**

Declaration by EU High Representative on behalf of the European Union on recent trials and sentences in Belarus

The EU would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the 'Declaration by the EU High Representative on behalf of the European Union on recent trials and sentences in Belarus', issued on 18 March:

"The EU condemns the continued detention, trials and sentencing on political grounds of civil society representatives and opposition leaders, including former presidential candidates, in the context of the elections of 19 December 2010. The EU is gravely concerned over allegations of torture and other forms of ill-treatment, intimidation and court irregularities and urges Belarusian authorities to cooperate fully with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Human Rights Council mechanisms in this regard. In this context, the EU reiterates its call for Belarus to reverse its decision not to renew the mandate of the OSCE Office in Minsk.

Such developments represent a further worsening of the human rights situation in Belarus and are in utter contradiction with respect for core international commitments endorsed by Belarus, notably with regard to freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, the right to a fair trial and the absolute prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

The EU continues to closely monitor developments in this regard and reiterates its demand that the Belarusian authorities immediately and unconditionally release and rehabilitate all those detained on political grounds.

The EU recalls that, in line with the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions of 31 January, the list of individuals subjected to restrictive measures remains open and under constant review to take into account further developments. In particular, the EU intends to continue to include Belarusian officials such as judges and prosecutors directly involved in the sentencing of persons on political grounds and in the crackdown on civil society. In addition, depending on the developments in Belarus, the EU stands ready to consider further targeted measures in all areas of cooperation, as appropriate.”