

Spanish Presidency of the European Union

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EU statement on fundamental freedoms in Belarus

The European Union regrets the lack of noticeable progress in addressing its concerns in the area of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Belarus.

In this context, the EU would like to voice its concern about police, administrative and judicial actions targeting individual activists of the Union of Poles in Belarus.

In the wider context of the EU-Belarus relations, we wish to draw attention to the statement made by the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, on 16 February, regarding the Union of Poles in Belarus, where she said, *inter alia*, that:

“The European Union has demonstrated considerable openness to engagement with Belarus, seen also in Belarus' inclusion in the Eastern Partnership. The success of this engagement is conditional on steps towards democratization and upholding human rights, including minority rights, taken by the government of Belarus. In this context, it is of utmost

importance that Belarus abides by its OSCE and international commitments in terms of the protection and promotion of the rights of its minorities. These developments undermine our efforts to strengthen relations between the European Union and Belarus.”

The human rights situation in the Republic of Belarus was discussed earlier this week by the EU Foreign Ministers, who also stressed the need for Belarus to abide by its OSCE and international commitments.

The European Union reaffirms its readiness to deepen its relations with Belarus in the light of further developments in Belarus towards democracy, human rights and the Rule of law and to assist the country in attaining these objectives.

Los países candidatos CROACIA* y la antigua REPÚBLICA YUGOSLAVA DE MACEDONIA*, los países del Proceso de Estabilización y Asociación y los países candidatos potenciales, ALBANIA, BOSNIA Y HERZEGOVINA y MONTENEGRO, los países de la Asociación Europea de Libre Comercio y los miembros del Espacio Económico Europeo, ISLANDIA y NORUEGA, al igual que la REPÚBLICA DE MOLDAVIA se alinean con esta declaración.

*Croacia y la Antigua República Yugoslava de Macedonia siguen perteneciendo al proceso de Estabilización y Asociación