

Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Permanent Council No. 593
16 February 2006

**EU Statement on Belarus – Closure of the
Youth Organisation RADA**

1. The EU would like to draw attention to a Statement by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the closure of the Youth Organisation RADA in Belarus, which is about to be published.

“The EU has learned with deep regret about the decision of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Belarus to close the Belarusian Union of Youth and Children’s Public Associations “RADA”. This decision is another serious blow to the development of civil society in Belarus.

“RADA” has established a wide network of relations with different youth organisations in Europe serving simultaneously as a focal point not only for NGO’s in neighbouring countries but also for many European partners in Belarus, as well. The union tried to promote in its activities the principles of European youth policy. “RADA” was also a member of the European Youth Forum.

The EU would like to reiterate its support for the development of civil society in the Republic of Belarus and people-to-people contacts with European partners. Promoting dialogue and cooperation among young people in Europe, in particular among neighbours, is an essential element of our policy.

The EU calls on the relevant Belarusian authorities to reconsider the decision with regard to the closure of “RADA”.”

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, EFTA country Liechtenstein, a member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine align themselves with this declaration.

*Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process