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United Kingdom Presidency of the Council of the European Union

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EU Statement on Belarus

The European Union expresses its concern for the future of the independent press in Belarus following the harassment of the last remaining independent daily newspaper Narodnaya Volya. The EU condemns the crippling fine imposed on the newspaper and the termination of printing and distribution contracts by the state owned monopoly printers and distributors. The EU regrets that the media space is increasingly controlled by the government and is concerned that this latest development will further limit the access of the Belarusian people to free and objective reporting of events in the country.

The EU calls on the Government of Belarus to respect its OSCE commitments on Freedom of Expression, Free Media and Information and to allow the independent media to operate freely. The EU also calls on the Minister of Information to meet with the EU Heads of Mission in Minsk to discuss the situation of the media in Belarus.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey and Croatia¹, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, as well as Ukraine align themselves with this declaration.

¹ Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process