

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union  
on Latvia**

The European Union has a strong interest in a satisfactory resolution of the differences over the treatment of non-Latvian citizens in Latvia, an interest already expressed in the work done in the framework of the Agenda 2000.

The European Union welcomes the decision of the Government of Latvia on 15 April to develop a revised Action Plan for the accelerated handling of citizenship issues and to make a more intensive effort to facilitate real social integration. The Union considers it essential for the Government's programme to match fully the standards established by the OSCE in this area, drawing on the advice of the OSCE's High Commissioner on National Minorities, and will continue to take a close interest in the implementation of the Government's programme. The Union hopes that the Latvian Parliament will take early action to adopt the Government's decisions.