

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Brussels, 9 June 1998

9245/98 (Presse 192)
P. 55/98

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

The European Union welcomes the action taken by the Latvian Saeima on 4 June to approve at a second reading legislation proposed by the Latvian Government to grant citizenship at birth to stateless children born in Latvia after 21 August 1991, and to abolish the windows system. These decisions represent a further step towards implementation of the outstanding recommendations of the OSCE's High Commissioner on National Minorities.

The European Union notes that the Saeima has voted not to address citizenship legislation under the urgency procedure. In spite of this the European Union hopes that the Saeima will complete work on the legislation abolishing the windows system and granting citizenship to stateless children without delay. The European Union looks forward to these next steps in the process.

The European Union also welcomes the statement by Foreign Minister Primakov in Helsinki on 1 June, in which he confirmed that Russia sought nothing more from the Latvian Government than full implementation of the OSCE's High Commissioner on National Minorities' recommendations. The European Union shares this objective.