

PR E S S R E L E A S E

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

The European Union welcomes the courageous and far-sighted decision of the Latvian Parliament on 22 June to adopt legislation on citizenship which includes the abolition of the "windows" system and the granting of citizenship to stateless children born in Latvia since 21 August 1991. Once adopted, the legislation will fulfil the key elements of the recommendations of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Mr Max van der Stoep, in respect of citizenship.

The European Union considers that this is an important step towards the further integration of the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia. The European Union hopes that the legislation will enter into force without delay. Once the legislation is in force, the European Union hopes that it will be implemented as quickly as possible. The European Union remains ready to offer practical assistance to the Latvian authorities to promote further the integration of minorities in Latvian society.

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