

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

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**Declaration of the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on the legislative elections in Belarus on 15 October 2000**

The EU has followed the legislative elections in Belarus on 15 October and the electoral campaign which preceded them with the utmost attention. It has taken note of the assessment of the electoral process made by the ODIHR and the Parliamentary Troika as part of the limited technical observation exercise decided on at the Vienna Conference on 30 August.

The EU deplores the fact that, despite certain positive measures taken after the telephone conversation between Mr Solana, Secretary-General/High Representative for the CFSP and President Lukashenko on 21 July, the Belarusian authorities did not take sufficient account of the joint recommendations of the OSCE, the EU and the Council of Europe, viz.:

- establishment of a "political truce" with the opposition;
- liberty and freedom of access to the media for all political groupings;
- substantial reform of the electoral code with a view to guaranteeing fair elections;
- review of the role of parliament in order to give it real powers.

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The EU reiterates its support for the process of democratisation in Belarus and hopes that significant progress can be made at the next elections held there.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this declaration.
