



PC.DEL/183/14
27 February 2014

ENGLISH only

EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 985
Vienna, 27 February 2014**

**EU Statement on the Sentencing of Demonstrators
Involved in the Bolotnaya Square Events**

Mr Chairman, the European Union would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the statement on 24 February 2014 by Baroness Ashton, EU High Representative, on the sentencing of demonstrators involved in the Bolotnaya Square events in Russia on 6 May 2012:

"The High Representative is concerned about the verdict of guilt and prison sentences issued today by the Moscow Zamoskvoretsky District Court against seven of the eight indicted involved in the Bolotnaya Square events of 6 May 2012. The charges brought against them and their sentences seem disproportionate in light of the nature of the events and the offences they are accused of.

The outcome of the trial, given the procedural shortcomings and long pre-trial detention, raises questions once again as to the state of the rule of law. It further raises concerns as to the impact of such trials on the exercise of freedom of expression and assembly in Russia. The arrest of dozens of people who had gathered outside the court to hear the verdict is an additional source of concern. The High Representative hopes that the sentences will be reconsidered in the appeal process and calls on Russia to uphold its international human rights commitments."

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate ALBANIA and the EFTA country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.