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**EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 924  
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**EU statement on Belarus**

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The EU is concerned by the fact that the Belarusian authorities have denied visas to election observers nominated by several participating States, including EU Member States, to participate in the mission of the OSCE/ODIHR to observe the upcoming parliamentary elections on 23 September 2012. Similar visa restrictions are imposed on journalists from EU countries who wish to report on the parliamentary elections in Belarus.

The EU urges Belarus to refrain from these undue restrictions and to issue the necessary entry visas to international election observers, in accordance with its commitments under paragraph 8 of the Copenhagen document.

The Acceding Country Croatia\*, the Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, Montenegro\*, Iceland+ and Serbia\*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

\* Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia 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.