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**DECLARATION BY THE EUROPEAN UNION ON BELARUS**

The European Union remains seriously concerned at the situation in Belarus, and particularly the issue of the Constitutional referendum. The European Union is particularly concerned, in this regard, that the ruling of the Constitutional Court, concerning the consultative nature of the referendum, should be respected.

President Lukashenko has indicated to Parliament that, notwithstanding the ruling of the Constitutional Court, he intends to consider its result binding. The European Union deeply regrets this development. It urges President Lukashenko in the strongest possible terms to respect the ruling of the Constitutional Court.

The European Union reiterates its desire for a close and cooperative relationship with a Belarus which is committed to democratic principles and economic reform. It recognises the challenges which Belarus faces in bringing about political and economic reform and stands ready to assist Belarus in this difficult, but necessary, task.

The European Union supports the efforts undertaken by the Chairman in Office and the Troika of the OSCE in respect of this situation.

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