

PRESS RELEASE

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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on Belarus: Ambassadors' Residences at Drozdy**

"The British Ambassador, as EU Presidency, informed the Belarusian Foreign Ministry this afternoon that EU Ambassadors in Minsk were being withdrawn on 22 June for urgent consultations in capitals following the unacceptable behaviour of the Belarusian authorities over Heads of Missions' residences. In particular, the EU objected in the strongest terms to the cut-off of water, electricity and telephone utilities, and refusal to allow Ambassadors' vehicles to enter the residential complex.

The Foreign Ministry was also told that Belarusian Ambassadors in EU capitals would be requested to return to Minsk to convey in strongest terms the disapproval of EU governments of the latest Belarusian actions.

Finally, the Presidency expressed regret at this turn of events which was not of the EU's choosing. But there was little alternative given that the Belarusian authorities had contravened international law and had reneged on an earlier agreement guaranteeing satisfactory treatment of Ambassadors and access to their residences.

The EU stand ready to resume a dialogue with the Belarusian government. That will be possible only if the Belarusian authorities respect the Vienna Convention and the fundamental principles governing diplomatic relations and representatives. In the meantime, EU Missions in Minsk will be headed by Charges d'Affaires."
