STATEMENT

by the Spokesperson on the arbitrary detentions of more than 30 civil society and political activists in Belarus

"We are concerned about the harassment, arbitrary arrest and detention of several dozens of representatives of civil society and opposition organisations in the run up to the World Ice Hockey Championship in Belarus. We condemn the use of administrative detention by the Belarusian authorities as an instrument aimed at creating pressure, fear and uncertainty among the young generation of people in Belarus.

We urge the authorities of Belarus to immediately stop these actions and to release all those unjustly detained, dropping all charges against them. We also reiterate our call for the immediate and unconditional release and rehabilitation of all political prisoners.

The EU’s readiness to further develop relations with Belarus remains conditional on concrete steps in Belarus towards democracy, human rights and the rule of law."

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