

Spanish Presidency of the European Union

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EU statement on the media situation in Belarus

The EU has taken note of the signature by the President of Belarus on February 1, 2010 of a decree on 'Measures to improve the Use of the National Segment of the Internet'. We understand that this decree, which is due to enter into force on 1 July, addresses very complex issues of Internet governance.

While the decree contains some measures to promote the use of the Internet, at the same time the EU notes the concerns expressed by civil society representatives regarding the possible negative impact on media freedom and freedom of expression in the course of the implementation of the decree.

In this regard, it would be useful to have an expert opinion on this legislation and we, therefore, call on the Belarusian authorities to seek the advice of the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

The EU would like to recall that freedom of expression as well as access to free and independent media are key elements of a functioning democracy and that the EU's further engagement with

Belarus depends on positive developments also in these areas. In this context, the EU expresses its concern over recent cases of harassment against representatives of independent media and civil society in Belarus. The case of Mr. Ivan Shulha is one of the latest examples.

Los países candidatos CROACIA* y la antigua REPÚBLICA YUGOSLAVA DE MACEDONIA*, los países del Proceso de Estabilización y Asociación y los países candidatos potenciales, ALBANIA, BOSNIA Y HERZEGOVINA, MONTENEGRO y SERBIA, los países de la Asociación Europea de Libre Comercio y los miembros del Espacio Económico Europeo, ISLANDIA y NORUEGA se alinean con esta declaración.

*Croacia y la Antigua República Yugoslava de Macedonia siguen perteneciendo al proceso de Estabilización y Asociación.