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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
concerning the arrest of opposition members in Cuba**

- The European Union is deeply concerned at the arrests of dozens of independent journalists and opposition members by the Cuban authorities.
- The wave of arrests is contrary to the principle of freedom of speech, a principle which the European Union is anxious to promote in its relations with non-member countries.
- The European Union condemns those arrests and demands that those persons, whom it considers prisoners of conscience, be released without delay.
- These recent events highlight the common position on Cuba, specifically the call for democratic reform and greater respect for human rights. Violations of fundamental civil and political rights will be monitored very closely by the European Union and they will continue to influence the Union's relations with Cuba.

The Acceding Countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia, the Associated Countries Bulgaria and Romania and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this declaration.

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