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Statement by the spokesperson of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the arrest of Mr Ales Bialiatski in Belarus

The spokesperson of Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission, issued the following statement today:

"The High Representative expresses her concern over reports that the authorities in Belarus detained Mr Ales Bialiatski, a prominent human rights defender who is chairman of the non-governmental organization Viasna and Vice-President of the International Human Rights Federation, and that Mr Bialiatski's private residence was searched, with the participation of the state security services.

The High Representative calls on the authorities in Minsk to clarify as a matter of urgency the reasons for the reported detention of Mr Bialiatski. The High Representative reiterates her strong regret at repeated acts of intimidation and harassment of peaceful human rights defenders in Belarus, and at the continued refusal to grant legal status to independent human rights organisations in the country."

P R E S S

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