



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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### **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on political prisoners in Eritrea**

The European Union remains deeply concerned that the Government of the State of Eritrea continues to severely violate its human rights obligations under domestic and international law. In particular, the European Union urges the Government of the State of Eritrea to unconditionally release all political prisoners.

Eight years ago, on 18 September 2001, a group of eleven prominent members of Parliament and of the People's Front for Democracy and Justice, the only political party in Eritrea, were arrested. Five days later, on 23 September 2001, ten independent journalists were also arrested. Since then, other individuals have been arrested and detained incommunicado, with their rights to a due process suspended.

Despite repeated appeals by the international community, including the EU, and several governmental and non-governmental human rights bodies, these prisoners remain in detention. None of them has ever been formally charged in court, as required by Eritrean law, and the fate of the prisoners remains unknown. Families, legal representatives and medical doctors have been denied access to the prisoners.

# **P R E S S**

This conduct is in clear violation of obligations established in the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified by Eritrea, such as the prohibition against arbitrary detention and the right of anyone deprived of his or her liberty to be treated with humanity and dignity.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia\* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Montenegro and Serbia, and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

\* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.