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Statement of Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy Benita Ferrero-Waldner congratulates Aleksandr Milinkevich on winning the 2006 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought

"I congratulate Mr. Aleksandr Milinkevich on winning the 2006 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought. Mr. Milinkevich has been a courageous fighter for democratic freedom and human rights in Belarus. As the leader of the Belarus united democratic opposition forces, he engaged himself consistently for greater freedom of thought and expression. The Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought fully recognizes his personal efforts.

With this prize, all those in Belarus who bravely fight at their own personal risk for democracy, are also awarded further international recognition. With this prize the EU indicates its strong hope to see free and fair local elections in January 2007. "

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