



JOINT STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
on the Presidential election held on 9 August in Belarus

Brussels, 11 August 2020 - “We, below undersigned Members of the European Parliament, express our solidarity with the Belarusian people and their persistent efforts to claim their fundamental citizens’ right to free and fair election.

We have been closely following developments related to the preparation and organization of the Presidential election in Belarus, including communication with Belarusian civic and political activists and members of the diaspora in our respective countries. Due to the Belarusian regime’s imposed restrictions and violations of fundamental freedoms, human rights and fraudulent election procedures, we do not recognize the Presidential election held on 9 August in Belarus neither as free and fair, nor as legitimate.

The Belarusian regime has crossed a red line by employing unprecedented violence and restrictive measures against Belarusian citizens demanding freedom and democratic changes. We condemn the crackdown and brutal arrests of thousands of Belarusian people, among which are activists, human rights defenders, political opponents and their team members, independent media representatives and bloggers, during the course of the Presidential election campaign as limiting their right to peaceful assembly and association. The level of violence against protesters in the night after the announcement of the alleged election results was of previously unseen scale and cannot be justified and repeated.

We acknowledge the dedication of the Belarusian civil society, which proved its level of maturity and organization by providing invaluable independent election observation data. We deplore restrictions employed by Belarusian authorities against independent election observers and are deeply distressed about differences in the exit polls submitted by the Belarusian state and the independent observers.

We call upon all Belarusian authorities to cease repressions, to immediately and unconditionally release all detainees and political prisoners and to restore the Internet access alongside with other communication means for Belarusian citizens. We urge the Belarusian regime to enter into a dialogue with opposition parties and civic activists to achieve consensus on the 9 August voting results by publishing the real results as established in each and every polling station.

The actions of the Belarusian regime are criminal. They are against the European values and principles of democracy. More importantly, they are against the will of the Belarusian people.

We call upon the EU leadership to assess and accordingly review the European Union's relations with Belarus. In the meantime, negotiations on EU-Belarus Partnership Priorities have to be suspended. The EU financial support can by no means benefit the Belarusian regime. It has to be channelled via trustworthy partners, including Belarusian civil society, to provide assistance and tangible results for the Belarusian people. Such support should be increased according to the needs. Among its priorities - enabling the civil society organizations and actors to provide assistance and relief to the victims of repressions and violence. We entrust the European Commission to engage into a closer cooperation with Belarusian civil society under the Eastern Partnership initiative.

We urge the EU leadership to apply targeted sanctions against all perpetrators of the rigged elections, violence and repressions. These sanctions should include not only the highest officials of Belarus and their family members, but also the middle level officials of the repressive structures and the Central Election Commission. The list of imposed restrictions should include a travel ban to the EU and a freeze of their assets in the EU, and should be applied until legitimate, free and fair elections take place in Belarus.

The EU must ensure a principled and value-based approach towards Belarus and put the people's desire for freedom and democratic changes at the centre of our policies.”

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