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## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

with request for inclusion in the agenda for the debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 115 of the Rules of Procedure

by Elisabeth Schroedter, Milan Horáček

on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

on arrests of political opponents in Belarus

**European Parliament resolution on arrests of political opponents in Belarus**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Belarus with regard, in particular, to its resolution of 21 February 2008,
  - having regards to the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly resolution 1606 on the abuse of criminal justice system in Belarus of 15 April 2008,
  - having regard to the Commission's statement of 26 March 2008 on the arrests of Belarusian citizens in Minsk on 25 March 2008,
  - having regard to the EU Presidency statement on the recent developments in the relations between Belarus and the United States of 6 May 2008,
  - having regard to the November 2006 European Commission declaration of the European Union's readiness to renew its relationship with Belarus and its people within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP),
  - having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas on 25 March 2008 during peaceful demonstrations in Minsk and other Belarusian cities on the occasion of Freedom day, Belarusian security forces resorted to the indiscriminate use of force to repress the demonstrators and arrested approximately 100 people including independent journalists,
- B. whereas the long detention sentences recently imposed on Andrey Kim and Syarhey Parsyukevich for allegedly using violence against policemen during the entrepreneurs' demonstrations of 10 January 2008 are the latest examples of the brutal repression carried out by the Minsk authorities against political opponents,
- C. whereas a number of young activists were sentenced to 2 years of "corrective labour" for participating in an "illegal" demonstration,
- D. whereas continued detention of Aliaksandr Kazulin, is a further example of Belarus' disregard for its obligations to respect the principles and the commitments of the OSCE, of which Belarus is a member,
- F. whereas these latest events contradict some limited positive developments, which took place over the last months, as regards the relations between the EU and Belarus, and, in particular, the agreement to open the European Commission delegation office in Minsk, the release of a number of political prisoners and the non-interference in the commemoration of the 22nd Chernobyl accident anniversary in Minsk on 26 April

2008,

1. Strongly condemns the action of the Belarusian authorities and security forces and the continuous arbitrary arrests of members of civil society and opposition activists, notably the recent temporary detention and trial of EP Sakharov Prize laureate Aleksander Milinkevich;
2. Urges the Belarusian authorities to release immediately Mr Alyksandr Kazulin, and to stop using intimidation, harassment, targeted arrests and politically motivated prosecutions against the activists of the democratic opposition and civil society in Belarus;
3. Reiterates its call on the Minsk authorities to free political prisoners and respect the rights of its citizens of freedom of assembly and of association and the freedom of expression without being subjected to arbitrary arrest and detention;
4. Underlines that the continuous political and administrative pressure exerted upon non-governmental organisations in Belarus is threatening their existence and undermines their independence; urges, in this regard, the Belarusian Government to repeal law No 71-3 of 15 December 2005 and in particular Article 193 - 1 of the Criminal Code criminalising the activities of non-registered associations;
5. Calls on the Council to maintain the imposed targeted sanctions and update the list of Belarusian officials responsible for serious human rights abuses;
6. Requests the Council and the Commission to extend more support to the victims of human rights violations in Belarus; is of the opinion that increased financial assistance to the civil society organisations, in particular free media, is necessary for the promotion of human rights in the country;
7. Highlights the fact that the recent wave of arrests and clamp-downs on the democratic opposition forces are taking place a few months before the parliamentary elections scheduled for October 2008; reminds the Belarusian authorities that the improvement of relations with the EU can only be possible if conditions are created for a free and fair ballot, in line with international democratic standards; urges, in this regard, the Belarusian authorities to implement OSCE standards in the organisation of the forthcoming parliamentary elections; calls on the government to give democratic opposition representatives access to district election commissions, to grant registration to all parliamentary candidates and their observers and to refrain from creating obstacles for a comprehensive and complete international election observation mission;
8. Deplores the decision of the Belarusian authorities to refuse repeatedly entrance visas to the Members of the European Parliament and national parliamentarians in the last years; calls on the Belarusian authorities not to create any further obstacles preventing the European Parliament delegation for relations with Belarus from visiting the country and from observing and obtaining first-hand experience in Belarus;
9. Calls on the Commission and the Council to make all efforts to reduce the cost and facilitate the issue of Schengen visas for Belarusian citizens entering the EU who are

not connected with the Lukashenko's regime;

10. Regrets the unjustified and unwarranted expulsion of the United States diplomats from Belarus;

11 Instructs its President to forwards this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the parliaments and governments of the Members States, the Secretary -General of the United Nations, the Parliamentary Assemblies of the OSCE and the Council of Europe, and the Belarusian authorities.