

Buzek condemns presidential elections in Belarus and calls for an immediate end to the violence against activists

Warsaw -
20/12/2010

The President of the European Parliament Jerzy Buzek made the following statement on the presidential elections in Belarus:

"As the international observers from the OSCE/ODIHR mission have stated, despite some limited improvements, once again the elections in Belarus fell short of meeting international standards of free, fair and transparent elections.

While we saw some positive developments during the electoral campaign, including the registration of the opposition candidates and their limited access to the state media, major irregularities were noted by the observers during the vote count on the election day. Moreover, the election night was overshadowed by violent clashes in Independence Square in Minsk and detentions and beatings of hundreds of Belarusian activists, journalists and civil society representatives.

The Lukashenko government clearly lacks democratic legitimacy and continues, regrettably, as one of the last authoritarian states in Europe. On behalf of the European Parliament, I express our great regret over yet another opportunity missed and our deep solidarity with the civil society, democratic opposition and all Belarusian citizens who strive for an independent, open and democratic Belarus, based on the rule of law and on the respect for human rights.

I am particularly concerned about the over excessive and disproportionate use of force by the Belarusian authorities, including the beating and detention of opposition presidential candidates and violence against journalists and civil society activists. The well-being of presidential candidate Uladzimir Nyaklyayew is of particular concern. I have been informed that some 600 people have been arrested, including nearly all opposition candidates - and I call for their immediate release and for an immediate end to the violence by the authorities. I condemn the arrests of people who found the courage to protest against the rigging of the presidential elections."

Denying the Belarusian people their well-deserved European future

"The EU's gradual re-engagement and conditional dialogue with the Belarus government must be accompanied by real progress in the field of democracy and clear signs of respect of human rights.

The EU would like to have a normal and sound relationship with Belarus, to engage in such mutually important issues as energy, trade and transport, and to have Belarusian people enjoying the full benefits of the Eastern Partnership programme and having the possibility of easier travel to the EU. It is so regrettable that the Belarusian regime, by its undemocratic actions, continues to deny the Belarusian people their well-deserved European future."

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