



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Plenary sitting

13.9.2011

B7-0499/2011

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 122 of the Rules of Procedure

on Belarus: arrest of Ales Bialatski, human rights defender

Leonidas Donskis, Marielle De Sarnez, Kristiina Ojuland, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Marietje Schaake, Sonia Alfano, Ramon Tremosa i Balcells
on behalf of the ALDE Group

European Parliament resolution on Belarus: arrest of Ales Bialatski, human rights defender

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Belarus,
 - having regard to the Council decision of 31 January 2011 (2011/69/CFSP) on restrictive measures against certain officials of Belarus,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions on Belarus adopted at the 3065th Foreign Affairs Council meeting in Brussels on 31 January 2011,
 - having regard to Council Decision 2011/69/CFSP of 31 January 2011 amending Council Decision 2010/639/CFSP concerning restrictive measures against certain officials of Belarus,
 - having regard to EU guidelines on human rights defenders,
 - having regard to the statement by the spokesperson of the EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the detention of Ales Bialatski,
 - having regard to Rule 122(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Belarus is a European country and an important EU neighbour and its people have a strong European vocation;
- B. whereas Belarus is bound by international commitments to the principles of international law and to fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- C. whereas harassment of human rights defenders and activists is systematic and widespread;
- D. whereas Ales Bialatski, prominent human rights defender, head of the Human rights centre "Vesna" was arrested 4 August 2011 and charged on 14 August for "concealment of profits on an especially large scale";
- E. whereas charges against Ales Bialatski are brought forward using personal data on Ales Bialatski sent by Lithuanian and Polish authorities on the basis of the implementation of bilateral legal aid agreements;
1. Strongly condemns the ongoing harassment and systematic prosecution of human rights defenders, democratic opposition, free media and civil society activists;

2. Demands the immediate and unconditional release of Ales Bialatski and other activists and human rights defenders;
3. Calls on the Belarusian authorities to repeal Article 193-1 of the Criminal Code of Belarus, prohibiting organisation of or participation in the activities of non-registered public associations as contrary to international standards on freedom of association and violating the OSCE and UN obligations undertaken by Belarus;
4. Dismayed by the grave error of judgement on the part of Lithuanian and Polish authorities that led to the transfer of personal data on Ales Bialatski to Belarusian authorities;
5. Calls for the inclusion of the case of Ales Bialatski on the agenda of Justice and Home Affairs Council in order to promote greater EU co-ordination and prevent possible cases of negligence in the implementation of bilateral legal aid agreements, as it relates to the activities of civil society organisations and human rights defenders where they are endangered or under threat of prosecution;
6. Calls on the Council to initiate audit of bilateral legal aid agreements and their compliance with the EU guidelines on human rights defenders;
7. Calls on the Council, the Commission and the EU High Representative to step up its pressure on the Belarusian authorities, further expanding the visa ban and asset freeze list to those involved in the arrest and prosecution of Ales Bialatski;
8. Stresses that EU assistance to Belarusian civil society and human rights defenders has to be further intensified;
9. Invites the Council to reflect on the possibility to have EU Special Representative for Belarus that could facilitate greater coherence and coordination of EU policies towards the country; considers that close partnership with the Council of Europe and the OSCE should be sought in this regard;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments of the Member States, the President, Government and Parliament of Belarus and the Parliamentary Assemblies of the Council of Europe and the OSCE.