EU-Belarus relations: State of play
Human rights situation and Ryanair flight diversion

SUMMARY

The falsified presidential elections of August 2020, and the brutal crackdown against peacefully protesting Belarusians, led to the isolation of the Aliaksandr Lukashenka regime. Despite the possibility of starting dialogue with the democratic opposition and Belarusian society, Aliaksandr Lukashenka chose another path, involving continued brutal repression of the country’s citizens.

The worsening human rights situation and hijacking of Ryanair flight FR 4978 provoked a response from the EU, including a ban on Belarusian air carriers landing in or overflying the EU, a major extension of the list of people and entities already subject to sanctions, and the introduction of sanctions on key sectors of the Belarusian economy.

The EU policy also demonstrates a readiness to support a future democratic Belarus. In this respect, the European Commission presented the outline of a comprehensive plan of economic support for democratic Belarus, worth up to €3 billion.

The European Parliament is playing an active part in shaping the EU’s response. Parliament does not recognise Lukashenka’s presidency and is speaking out on human rights abuses in Belarus. The Belarusian democratic opposition, which was awarded the 2020 Sakharov Prize, is frequently invited to speak for the Belarusian people in the European Parliament.

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Background

EU-Belarus relations during Aliaksandr Lukashenka’s long presidency, which began in 1994, have fluctuated. Although the EU-Belarus Partnership and Cooperation Agreement was signed in 1995, ratification has been frozen since 1997, owing to a lack of progress in respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Sanctions against Belarus were first introduced in 2004, as a response to the unresolved disappearance of four people in 1999 and 2000. The sanctions, which targeted four individuals connected with that case, together with arms embargo (initially introduced in 2011), have been prolonged each year, and are currently in force until 28 February 2022.

Relations with the EU improved after Belarus refused to recognise Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014. Political repression eased slightly, with the release of some political prisoners in August 2015 and non-violent October 2015 presidential elections. As a result, in February 2016 the EU decided not to extend sanctions against Lukashenka, 169 other Belarusians and 3 companies. A further sign of rapprochement came in 2020 with the signing of the EU-Belarus visa facilitation and readmission agreements.

This improved climate changed dramatically with the presidential elections of 9 August 2020. Despite independent exit polls showing a victory for Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, Belarus’s Central Election Commission announced that elections had been won by Aliaksandr Lukashenka with over 80 % of the votes. The Lukashenka regime had permitted Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya to run in the elections. Previously this right had not been granted to banker Viktar Babaryka or blogger Siarhei Tsikhanouski (Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya’s husband): both those candidates were arrested. Many commentators consider that Lukashenka was convinced that Belarusians would not support a female candidate. The openly falsified electoral results sparked widespread peaceful protests, provoking a brutal state militia crack down. Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya decided to leave the country and she arrived in the Lithuanian capital, Vilnius on 11 August 2020. She went on to establish the Coordination Council, with the aim of organising a peaceful transfer of power through dialogue, calling for the organisation of fresh, fair and democratic presidential elections. Opposition leaders – including members of Tsikhanouskaya’s Coordination Council – were either forced into exile or arrested.

The European Council did not recognise the election result, as ‘the elections were neither free nor fair’. This statement was followed by the Council of the European Union conclusions, which stated that Aliaksandr Lukashenka lacked any democratic legitimacy. The above-mentioned events also led to the introduction of three new rounds of sanctions. They consisted of a travel ban and an asset freeze against a gradually widening scope of targeted individuals and entities. The first round was announced on 2 October 2020 and concerned 40 people responsible for repression and intimidation against peaceful protesters and journalists, as well as for misconduct of the electoral process. The day after the end of the previous Lukashenka presidential term, the list was further extended on 6 November 2020, with 15 names. The new list included both Aliaksandr Lukashenka and his son Viktar. The third list of sanctions was announced on 17 December 2020. At that time, the list was composed of 88 individuals and 7 entities and included, inter alia, companies that delivered the information technology (IT) systems and police equipment, such as IT surveillance platforms and barrier systems designed for riot control, used against Belarus civil society organisations.

The decision of the Lukashenka regime to hijack a Ryanair flight on 23 May 2021 in order to detain the 26-year-old blogger and former editor-in-chief of Telegram channel NEXTA, Raman Pratasevich, further aggravated the situation. The EU’s response of further sanctions against Belarus, was followed by the Belarusian announcement of a decision to suspend its participation in the Eastern Partnership, launch the procedure to suspend the readmission agreement, recall its permanent representative to the EU for consultations and request a reciprocal move on the EU side.
Current trends in the human rights situation in Belarus

The human rights situation in Belarus has been poor for decades, with continuing harassment and pressure against civil society activists and independent journalists. The political trials of the people arrested last year are currently taking place. There are 526 recognised political prisoners in Belarus according to Viasna Human Rights Center and this number is growing quickly. In May 2021 alone, at least 109 people were convicted in politically motivated criminal trials, including minors sentenced to two to five years in a juvenile facility. The conditions in prisons and detention centres are bad, with cases of torture and a lack of proper medical care, including refusal to give medicines delivered by families to detainees. One of many cases is that of Vitold Asharuk, an opposition activist aged 50, who died due to the rapid deterioration of his health conditions in prison. Other prisoners have attempted suicide, having suffered torture. Since August 2020, over 3 000 criminal cases have been initiated for violation of the procedure for holding mass events and protests. It is estimated that at least 480 students have been detained, and 158 students have been expelled from universities. As a result, over 14 000 Belarusians have decided to leave their country.

Journalists are also subject to repression. Reporters Without Borders describe Belarus as the most dangerous country in Europe for media personnel. There are over 20 journalists in Belarusian prisons. This includes two young Belsat journalists, sentenced for two years in prison for live coverage of a demonstration in homage to murdered activist Roman Bondarenko, and Andrzej Poczobut, who contracted Covid while in prison. The internet portal tut.by, which reported widely about events in Belarus, was closed down on 18 May 2021 and several staff members were arrested.

On 8 June 2021, Lukashenka signed a law tightening penalties for participation in demonstrations and promotion of ‘extremist activities’. Participation in more than two demonstrations is now punishable by three years in prison, financing of opposition activities, by five years in prison, and participation in or promotion of ‘extremist activities’ by six years in prison. Furthermore, other sections of the penal code can also be used against those willing to stand up for a democratic Belarus. In May 2021, a court sentenced former military officer Dzianis Urad, to 18 years in prison, after he published a secret letter authorising the use of armed forces in law enforcement activities. As initially feared in the case of Mr Pratasevich, the Belarusian penal code also envisages the death penalty in some cases, including for terrorism. Mr Pratasevich was officially accused of organising mass unrest (possible penalty 15 years), but his inclusion on the Belarusian secret service list of ‘individuals involved in terrorist activity’, may result in further charges, with a possible death sentence. The practice of Communist judges announcing death penalties at the authorities’ request was frequent in the USSR and other communist countries, especially during the Stalinist era. Belarus is the only country in Europe where the death penalty is still in place. The EEAS considers it probable that the most recent execution took place in June 2021. As the carrying out of executions is a state secret, the evidence was based on the prison administration’s refusal to provide information to a family about a person’s whereabouts. In the past, this refusal has been an indication that a secret execution has taken place.

The Lukashenka regime also targets ethnic minorities, with representatives of the Polish minority subject to arrest and harassment, minority school closures, and an attempt to create a negative narrative about Poland, for instance through the recent inauguration of a public holiday connected with the Soviet invasion of Poland on 17 September 1939. Discrimination against the Roma minority also persists, with massive roundups and the arbitrary detention of approximately 100 Roma in Mahilioŭ in May 2019, and other cases of ethnic profiling by the police.

On 31 May 2021, the Belarusian authorities suspended the possibility for the vast majority of its citizens to leave the country. The authorities quoted anti-Covid measures as a reason. However, it is theoretically still possible to leave the country by plane. Currently, the Belarusian airline Belavia can only cross the Russian border, as Ukraine also introduced a ban, and land in a limited number of eastern and southern countries. The introduction of the travel ban immediately after the Ryanair
flight incident suggests that the true intention of Lukashenka’s regime was to further limit the freedoms of Belarusian citizens.

**Ryanair flight forced to land in Belarus**

On 23 May 2021, Ryanair flight FR4978 was travelling between two EU capitals – Athens and Vilnius. The airline was Irish, while the plane was registered in Poland. A false bomb alert led to the flight’s diversion, as requested by Belarusian air traffic control, and enforced by assisting Belarusian military planes, resulting in a forced landing in Minsk. At the airport, Raman Pratasevich – founder of Telegram channel NEXTA – and his partner Sofia Sapega were arrested, and eventually moved to house arrest at the end of June. The bomb threat letter cited by Belarus was sent after the flight was diverted.

The NEXTA channel played an important role in providing independent information in Belarus and mobilising protests last year. As a result, NEXTA’s founders – Raman Pratasevich and Stepan Putilo (Mr Putilo, now in exile, represented the Belarusian democratic opposition during the 2020 Sakharov Prize award ceremony) – were added by the Belarusian KGB to the list of ‘individuals involved in terrorist activity’. Sofia Saepga is a final year student at the European Humanities University (EHU) – a Belarusian university in exile in Vilnius.

The EU’s response came the next day when the European Council meeting of 24 May 2021 demanded the release of Pratasevich and Saepga and called for the International Civil Aviation Organization to conduct an urgent investigation into the incident. The European leaders also asked for the adoption of further sanctions, including targeted economic sanctions, called on EU-based carriers to avoid overflying Belarus and called for Belarusian airlines to be banned from overflying EU airspace. Bans were introduced quickly, not only by the EU, but also by Ukraine and other countries; work on further sanctions was stepped up.

**The fourth package of sanctions**

Council met on 21 June 2021 with Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya and approved a fourth package of sanctions, this time targeting an additional 78 people and 8 entities, including Lukashenka’s family, members and seven people and one entity connected with the Ryanair flight hijacking. The list also includes several prominent businessmen and women who support and benefit from the Lukashenka regime, and judges, prosecutors and others responsible for human rights violations. The EU’s restrictive measures currently apply to 166 people and 15 entities. These sanctions are coordinated with the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada.

On 24 June 2021, Council approved targeted economic sanctions. These include a prohibition on directly or indirectly selling, supplying, transferring or exporting to Belarus equipment, technology or software intended primarily for use in the monitoring or interception of internet and telephone communications, dual-use goods, and technologies for military use, and a prohibition on providing the Belarusian government, or public bodies and agencies with insurance or re-insurance. Restrictions were introduced on trade in petroleum products, potassium chloride (‘potash’) and in goods used for the production or manufacturing of tobacco products, and on access to EU capital markets. It was also decided that the European Investment Bank would stop any disbursement or payment under any existing agreements in relation to projects in the public sector, and any existing Technical Assistance Service Contracts. As EU Member States are members of different multilateral development banks, they were required to take action to limit those banks’ involvement in Belarus. This concerned in particular the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

These sanctions are designed to limit further access by the Belarusian regime to technologies with the potential to facilitate human rights abuses, and to limit the Lukashenka regime’s access to foreign markets and financing. It is worth noting that potash, used mainly as a fertiliser, accounts for
8.7% of Belarusian exports, and the Belarusian share in global potash production is equal to 15 to 20%; oil and gas exports are estimated to account for 30% of the government’s budget revenue.

The sanctions have been described by some commentators as a mini economic embargo. The restrictions generally concern new contracts only. Restrictions apply without prejudice to the execution of contracts concluded before 25 June 2021 or ancillary contracts necessary for the execution of such contracts. In the case of investment services, transferable securities and money-market instruments with a maturity exceeding 90 days, and new loans or credit with a maturity exceeding 90 days, the restrictions apply from 29 June 2021.

In its conclusions of 24 June 2021, the European Council welcomed the above-mentioned sanctions, describing them as a ‘timely implementation of the measures concerning Belarus, in line with its conclusions of 24-25 of May 2021’. The European Council called once again for the immediate release of all political prisoners, including Raman Pratasevich and Sofia Sapega and an end to the repression of civil society and independent media, reiterating the right of the Belarusian people to elect their president through new, free and fair elections.

Outline of the European Commission’s comprehensive plan of economic support for a future democratic Belarus

The European Union is ready to support a future democratic Belarus. In this respect, on 28 May 2021, the European Commission presented an outline of its proposed comprehensive plan of economic support to democratic Belarus, worth up to €3 billion.

The aim of the plan is to activate longer-term support immediately following the beginning of a democratic transition in Belarus. While the plan does not define the nature of the changes on which the financial package is conditional, reforms would presumably have to respect – in the words of European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen – ‘the democratic choice of the Belarusian people’, and thus involve a re-run of the August 2020 presidential election, which the EU considers to have been neither free nor fair. The package would be a mix of grants and loans leveraging public and private investments, supporting Belarusian economic stabilisation and institutional reforms.

The proposed three pillars, to be fine-tuned taking into account the preferences and policy choices of future democratic authorities of Belarus, would be: 1) boosting economic recovery through financial injections (up to €1.5 billion in loans, as well as public and private investments, including macro-financial assistance); 2) supporting structural reforms and strengthening competitiveness through a transition package (up to €400 million in grant assistance under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation (NDICI)-Global Europe Instrument); and 3) ‘build back better’: investing in sustainable infrastructure and the green and digital transformation (€100 million in grant funding to leverage up to €1 billion in key public and private investment). The EU would prioritise five flagship investments, totalling €870 million, to deliver swift and tangible results to the Belarusian people.

Figure 1 – Five flagship projects included into the outline of the comprehensive plan of economic support for a future democratic Belarus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flagship 1</th>
<th>Supporting an innovative and competitive economy including through direct support to 20 000 SMEs</th>
<th>€350 million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flagship 2</td>
<td>Improving transport connectivity and facilitating trade at the EU-Belarus borders</td>
<td>€200 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flagship 3</td>
<td>Boosting innovation and digital transformation, including through an Eastern Partnership IT school in Minsk</td>
<td>€20 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Flagship 4 | Supporting a green Belarus, including through support for energy efficiency, waste management and infrastructure | €200 million

Flagship 5 | Investing in a democratic, transparent and accountable Belarus | €100 million

The European Commission would also offer to conclude a bilateral framework agreement, as the previous partnership and cooperation agreement of 1995 was never ratified by the EU.

**Russian influence in Belarus**

Of all the six (current and former) Eastern Partnership countries, Belarus has the closest relations with Moscow. It belongs to Russia-led regional organisations such as the Eurasian Economic Union and Collective Security Treaty Organisation. Moreover, in 1999 the two countries created a Union State of Belarus and Russia in 1999. The Union State Treaty envisages far-reaching political and economic integration, including a common head of state, legislature, flag, coat of arms, anthem, constitution, army, citizenship and currency. To date, most of its provisions have not been implemented; however, in 2018 representatives of the two countries started work on 31 roadmaps to deepen ties. According to President Lukashenka, all but six or seven of them were ready as of February 2021 – although the idea of a full merger is apparently not on the table.

The Belarusian economy is critically dependent on Russia, which is the country's main trading partner, accounting for 50% of the country’s imports and 45% of exports. Until recently, Russian crude oil sales to Belarus were exempt from export duties, allowing Minsk to purchase oil from Moscow at a discount and generate significant export revenue (in 2019, US$5.2 billion) from its refineries. Russian tax reforms ended this effective subsidy in 2020, but Russia continues to support Belarus in other ways, most recently through a US$1.5 billion loan (€1.25 billion, less than half the maximum support envisaged by the above-mentioned EU plan in support of democratic reforms); of this, Russia paid a second tranche of US$500 million in June 2021.

Belarus has made some efforts to assert its independence from Russia. As already mentioned, in 2014 it refused to recognise the latter's annexation of Crimea, and mended bridges with the West. Despite close military cooperation and the presence of Russian radar and naval communications stations, Belarus has consistently resisted Russian demands for a permanent military base on its soil. Economic relations are marred by recurrent trade spats about everything from oil and gas to dairy products, while personal ties between Lukashenka and Putin are reportedly difficult. Most Belarussians are Russian-speakers, but after years of dismissing the Belarussian language, the Minsk authorities have begun promoting it, in an apparent attempt to build a separate cultural identity.

However, Western criticisms of the August 2020 presidential election and the Ryanair incident have left Belarus more isolated, and more dependent on Russian support than ever. After some initial hesitation, Russia threw its weight behind the Lukashenka regime, sending financial assistance and even journalists to staff Belarusian state media after employees of the latter came out in support of the opposition; shortly after post-election protests broke out, Putin revealed that Russian police were prepared to intervene if the situation in the neighbouring country spun out of control. Senior Russian officials have criticised an alleged US attempts to foment a 'colour revolution' in Belarus.

With regard to the Ryanair flight diversion, whether or not Moscow was involved remains an open question, with some observers suggesting that it could hardly have been conducted without Russia's acquiescence. It is also debatable whether the incident was the result of purely internal developments, as part of the regime's crackdown on dissent, or whether it reflects the current state of Russia-Belarus relations; according to some analysts, Lukashenko's intention may have been to consolidate his position vis-à-vis Russia, by demonstrating that he is firmly in control, thus discouraging Moscow from looking for alternative leaders. Be that as it may, Moscow appears to be the main beneficiary, as the resulting deterioration of relations with the EU puts Minsk in an even
weaker position to resist Russian dominance. In a show of strong diplomatic support for Belarus, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov described Western outrage over the affair as an attempt to ‘demonise’ Lukashenka.

EU and NATO on Belarus-Russia relations

The fact that the Russian leadership seeks to retain control over the Lukashenko regime was recognised in the joint communication on Russia published by the European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on 16 June 2021.

The NATO military alliance focuses on a strategic perspective and recognises that Russia's growing military build-up in Eastern Europe, which includes military integration with Belarus, is a growing threat to the security of the Euro-Atlantic area.

In this regard, NATO has called on Russia and Belarus to act in a predictable and transparent way as envisaged by their international obligations and OSCE commitments. This applies also to Russian-Belarusian Zapad 2021 military exercises, due to take place on 10-16 September 2021. NATO has declared that it will 'follow' their 'scale, scope, and aftermath'.

The last Russian-Belarusian exercises – Zapad 2017 – were used to increase tension, as Russia initially claimed that exercise involved 12 700 soldiers. This is just below the 13 000 threshold established by the OSCE Vienna document on confidence- and security-building measures. The threshold defines a moment when invitation of foreign observers is mandatory. According to NATO, the 2017 exercises hugely exceeded those numbers and limited international observation was allowed only following a late invitation issued by Belarus.

In April 2021, the Belarusian minister of defence confirmed to the press that representatives of Western countries will be invited to observe this year’s exercise. It is argued that Zapad 2021 will support Putin's efforts to establish a continuous Russian military presence in Belarus. This move was refused for years by Lukashenka. It should be noted that in March 2021 a five-year strategic military partnership programme was signed by the two countries' defence ministers.

International reactions

G7

The leaders who met at the G7 summit on 11-13 June 2021 expressed concern about the continuing poor human rights situation in Belarus, as demonstrated by the forced landing of Ryanair flight FR 4978 and the arrest of Raman Pratasevich and Sofia Sapiega. The leaders announced that they would cooperate on sanctions against those responsible, and also support civil society organisations, independent media and human rights defenders in Belarus. They called on the Lukashenka regime to change course, enter into meaningful dialogue with all sectors of society and hold new free and fair elections.

NATO

Leaders at the NATO summit in Brussels on 14 June 2021 expressed their deep concern about developments in Belarus since August 2020. The summit declared that the events had implications for regional stability and that NATO would continue to monitor them vigilantly. NATO also condemned the forced Ryanair flight diversion and the arrest of Pratasevich and Saiepa. The NATO summit communiqué underlined that a 'democratic, sovereign, and stable Belarus is in all of our interests'.

EU-US summit

An EU-US summit took place in Brussels on 15 June 2021. In the statement issued after the meeting, the EU and the US announced that they would hold the Lukashenka regime to account for its
escalating attacks on human rights, endangering of aviation safety and continuous assault on the opposition and press freedoms, as exemplified by the Ryanair flight diversion.

International Civil Aviation Organization investigation

The ICAO, a specialised United Nations agency, agreed to conduct a fact-finding investigation on Ryanair flight FR 4978 of 23 June 2021. The report is expected in the autumn of 2021.

Biden-Putin summit

The Biden-Putin summit took place on 16 June 2021 in Switzerland and finished with two separate press conferences. While some expected extensive discussions on Belarus, President Biden was very brief on the topic during his press conference. Joe Biden stated that he had expressed the United States’ concern about Belarus, and while president Putin did not disagree about the facts, it was clear that the two presidents had different ideas about what would be done in the current situation. President Vladimir Putin did not mention Belarus at all during his press conference. According to the Russian foreign affairs minister, Sergey Lavrov, the discussion concerned several states and the need to recognise their history, tradition, culture and values.

European Parliament engagement

In a resolution of September 2020, the European Parliament stated that it did not recognise the election of Aliaksandr Lukashenka to the post of President of Belarus. It condemned Lukashenka’s crackdown against Belarusians, and described Lukashenka’s regime in Belarus as illegitimate, illegal and criminal. At the same time, Parliament strongly supported the people of Belarus in their demand for free and fair elections and respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights in their country. The draft report on EU-Russia political relations of Parliament’s Foreign Affairs Committee adopted on 14 July 2021 denounces the ‘illegitimate regime of Alexander Lukashenko’ and Russia’s role in supporting it.

Parliament is deeply engaged in activities relating to Belarus. The 2020 Sakharov Prize was awarded to the country’s democratic opposition, represented by the Coordination Council and, since the August 2020 presidential elections, Parliament has approved three resolutions addressing Belarus directly. Parliament’s delegation for relations with Belarus is also very active. Since the presidential elections the delegation chair has issued several statements, frequently dealing with the most pressing events in the country. The great majority of them were joint statements with the chairs of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality, the Subcommittee on Human Rights, the Delegation to the EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee and Parliament’s Standing Rapporteur on Belarus. Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya and representatives of the Coordination Council have been invited to and spoken at meetings of the above-mentioned parliamentary committees and, as representatives of the Belarusian democratic opposition, were guests of honour at the Sakharov Prize award ceremony.

Parliament’s reaction to the Ryanair flight diversion

On the day of the Ryanair hijacking, Parliament’s Foreign Affairs Committee chair, the chair of Parliament’s delegation to Belarus and Parliament’s standing rapporteur for Belarus issued a joint statement calling for the immediate release of prisoners and for urgent EU action. This call was repeated by Parliament’s President, David Sassoli, during his speech at the following day’s European Council. President Sassoli called for a strong, immediate and unified EU response to the situation. Finally, on 10 June, the European Parliament plenary adopted a resolution addressing both systemic repression in Belarus and the consequences of the Ryanair flight forced diversion. The resolution condemns the hijacking of the Ryanair flight, calls for the immediate release of Raman Pratasevich and Sofia Sapiega, and all detained journalists and political prisoners. Parliament stressed that the current situation was a test of the credibility of the European Union and the effectiveness of its foreign policy-making. The resolution also called for a thorough assessment of the consequences of
the events for international air transport and aviation safety, overall security in Europe and the safety of asylum-seekers and Belarusians in exile, who may be threatened by Lukashenka’s secret services active on EU territory.

Repressed people named in the European Parliament resolution of 10 June 2021

The following political prisoners, detainees and journalists were listed in the resolution’s various sections:

- Yauhen Afahnau
- Andrei Aniskevich
- Viktar Babaryka
- Andżelika Borys
- Halina Chuhunova
- Dzmitry Furmanau
- Dzmitry Kazlou
- Aliaksandr Khrapko
- Siarhei Ksenzhuk
- Uladzimir Kniha
- Dzmitry Kurchanau
- Alena Loika
- Radzivon Medusheuski
- Andrei Niamirski
- Safiya Nisht
- Illia Palkhouski
- Andrzej Poczobut
- Raman Pratasevich
- Yauhen Raznichenka
- Sofia Saega
- Iryna Shchasnaya
- Pavel Seviarynets
- Katsiaryna Smimova
- Mikola Statkevich
- Siarhei Tsikhanouski
- Mikita Uvarau
- Andrei Voinich
- Pavel Yukhnevich
- Ihrar Vinakura
- Maksim Viniarški
- Iryna Shchasnaya


The resolution called for various sanctions, the vast great majority of which were approved by Council on 21 and 24 June 2021. The other sanction proposals, such as those targeting the steel and wood-processing industries, have not yet been officially addressed by Council.

Parliament also underlined the need to communicate clearly that democratic change in Belarus will meet with the EU’s readiness to provide the country with tangible assistance. In this respect, Parliament welcomed the European Commission’s outline of a comprehensive plan of economic support for a future democratic Belarus and called on the Commission and Council to further develop and promote it. The resolution went on to stress the need to maintain and expand contacts with representatives of Belarusian democratic forces. In this regard, Parliament called for members of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya’s Coordination Council and National Anti-Crisis Management to be invited to various bi- and multi-lateral meetings, including the Eastern Partnership summit scheduled for December 2021.

MAIN REFERENCES

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European Council, Council of the European Union website, Press releases and statements on Belarus.
Viasna (Spring), Human Rights Center.

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