



Joint statement by:

- the Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, MEP David McAllister
- the Chair of the Delegation for relations with Belarus, MEP Robert BIEDROŃ, and
- the European Parliament's Standing Rapporteur on Belarus, MEP Petras AUŠTREVICIUS

on the 1st anniversary of the fraudulent presidential election in Belarus

Brussels, 9 August 2021 – "9 August marks the first anniversary of the presidential election in Belarus, won in the polls by the candidate of the united opposition, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, and stolen from the people by autocrat Aliaksandr Lukashenka. This election sparked the rise of civic activism and the political awakening of Belarusian society, which in turn led to popular protests, often led by women, of unprecedented proportions in the country's history.

One year has passed and yet, despite the international community's repeated calls for dialogue, the regime's all-out, brutal crackdown on opposition figures, independent media and civil society representatives shows no sign of abating. On the contrary, Lukashenka's henchmen have ominously pledged to 'liquidate' all remaining non-governmental organisations in order to silence all voices of dissent.

In addition, by weaponising illegal migration, the regime carries out hybrid attacks on Lithuania and violates the European Union's external borders.

Lukashenka has already lost Belarus – owing his continued usurpation of power to crude violence, and to the support of the security apparatus and of the Kremlin. In this respect, we insist that any agreements concluded by Lukashenka or on his behalf, notably with Russia, should not be recognised as legitimate or valid by the international community.

The regime is continuing to cause immense damage to Belarus. Thousands of Belarusians have been forced to leave their country for fear of persecution. Ongoing violations of human rights and outrageous acts such as the forced landing of a Ryanair flight have led the European Union to introduce extensive restrictive measures, including targeted economic sanctions. In these dire circumstances, further aggravated by the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, flippantly handled by the authorities, there is no alternative to a genuine political dialogue leading to a peaceful transition of power.

In view of the atrocities committed by Lukashenka's regime, and of the dangers it poses to the stability of our entire continent, we expect the international community to react firmly and call on the European Union to implement the remainder of the recommendations formulated by the European Parliament in its resolutions of 17 September 2020, 26 November 2020 and 10 June 2021 on Belarus.

Until then, we stand by the brave and resolute people of Belarus in their quest for dignity and freedom. We shall continue supporting the democratic forces of Belarus: they, not Lukashenka, are the true voice of the Belarusian society.

Zhyve Belarus!"

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