



TEXTS ADOPTED

P9_TA(2021)0420

The situation in Belarus after one year of protests and their violent repression

European Parliament resolution of 7 October 2021 on the situation in Belarus after one year of protests and their violent repression (2021/2881(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Belarus,
- having regard to the European Council conclusions of 24 May 2021 and 25 June 2021 on Belarus,
- having regard to the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on 21 June 2021 on Belarus,
- having regard to the 2021 State of the Union address by President von der Leyen,
- having regard to the statements by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR), Josep Borrell, of 26 March 2021 on the EU's support to the International Accountability Platform for Belarus and of 15 July 2021 on the crackdown against civil society in Belarus, and to his declarations on behalf of the EU of 30 July 2021 on the instrumentalisation of migrants and refugees by the regime and of 8 August 2021 on the first anniversary of the 9 August 2020 fraudulent presidential elections in Belarus,
- having regard to the statements by the European External Action Service (EEAS) Spokesperson of 6 July 2021 on the sentencing of Viktor Babaryka and other political trials, of 7 July 2021 on limiting the diplomatic presence of Lithuania, of 30 August 2021 on the repressions against journalists and media, and of 6 September 2021 on the sentencing of Maryia Kalesnikava and Maksim Znak,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to all human rights conventions to which Belarus is a party,
- having regard to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Charter of Paris for a New Europe,
- having regard to the report of 5 July 2021 of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus, Anaïs Marin, to the UN Human Rights Council,

- having regard to the UN Human Rights Council resolution of 13 July 2021 on the situation of human rights in Belarus,
 - having regard to its recommendation of 16 September 2021 to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the direction of EU-Russia political relations¹,
 - having regard to the awarding of the European Parliament’s 2020 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to the democratic opposition in Belarus,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas more than one year after the so-called 9 August 2020 elections, the Belarusian authorities are continuing their repression against the Belarusian people, with many citizens being harassed, arrested, tortured and convicted for expressing opposition to the regime or to the widespread human rights violations taking place in Belarus; whereas the EU and its Member States did not recognise the results of the presidential election;
 - B. whereas almost 40 000 Belarusians are estimated to have been detained at some point for protesting against the regime; whereas human rights defenders have documented hundreds of cases of torture and ill-treatment, while several people are still missing and others have been found dead; whereas inhumane treatment, torture and deliberate refusal to provide medical care continue to take place in Belarusian detention centres and prisons, where several protesters have died; whereas several cases of suicide attempts in court and in prison have been documented; whereas the country’s entire judiciary appears to have been transformed into an agent of the regime and is being used to ensure its survival; whereas there are more than 720 political prisoners in Belarus and more than 4 600 criminal cases open against Belarusian citizens, while not a single case has been opened against persons responsible for or complicit in the violence and repression; whereas human rights defenders, opposition politicians, civil society, independent journalists and other activists are systematically subjected to violent repression; whereas thousands of Belarusians have been forced or otherwise compelled to leave their homeland and seek safety abroad;
 - C. whereas the Member States, in particular Poland and Lithuania, have provided shelter, medical treatment and scholarships for thousands of asylum seekers fleeing persecution by Lukashenka for their democratic aspirations;
 - D. whereas the Belarusian regime is running a repression campaign against civil society and human rights defenders aiming to silence all remaining independent voices in Belarus; whereas close to 250 civil society organisations have been liquidated or are in the process of being liquidated, including the Human Rights Center Viasna, which suffered an unprecedented crackdown through the arrest and charging of its leadership, staff members and volunteers, including Ales Bialiatski, the Chair of Viasna; Valiantsin Stefanovich, member of the Viasna Board and Vice-President of the International Federation for Human Rights; Marfa Rabkova, the coordinator of Viasna’s network of volunteers; Andrei Chepyuk; Leanid Sudalenka; Tatsyana Lasitsa; Maryia Tarasenko; Uladzimir Labkovich; and other Viasna staff members and volunteers;

¹ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2021)0383.

- E. whereas Belarusian courts have delivered more than 120 unfair and arbitrary verdicts in politically motivated trials, often held behind closed doors and without due process of law; whereas Belarusian opposition politician Viktor Babaryka has been sentenced to 14 years in prison, and the Belarusian opposition leaders and political prisoners Maryia Kalesnikava, a laureate of the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought and recipient of the International Women of Courage Award, and Maksim Znak, a prominent lawyer, have been sentenced to 11 years and 10 years respectively for allegedly plotting a coup; whereas almost 500 journalists have been arrested and the Belarusian authorities are continuing their crackdown on and harassment of independent Belarusian journalists and are engaging in deliberate attempts to hamper objective reporting; whereas on 27 August 2021, the Belarusian regime ordered the closure of the Belarusian Association of Journalists, the largest independent journalist organisation in the country, which was awarded the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in 2004; whereas two Belsat journalists, Yekaterina Andreeva and Darya Chultsova, continue to serve their sentences in a penal colony in Belarus;
- F. whereas pressure on the Belarusian trade unions has dramatically increased in recent weeks, with leaders and members of the Belarusian Independent Trade Union (BITU) and the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (BKDP) being arrested, fined and subjected to searches by the KGB; whereas Belarus rates as one of the worst countries for working people in the 2021 ITUC Global Rights Index;
- G. whereas Aliaksandr Lukashenka continues his campaign against the Polish minority, having imprisoned Andżelika Borys and Andrzej Poczobut, two leaders of the Polish community, attacking Polish-language schools and running a propaganda campaign based on false historical narratives;
- H. whereas there is no indication that Belarusian authorities are investigating the thousands of reports of police brutality filed since August 2020, or the killings of protesters; whereas the widespread impunity for human rights violations perpetuates the desperate situation of the Belarusian people; whereas the absence of the rule of law impedes their right to a fair trial; whereas Belarus is the only country in Europe to still carry out capital punishment;
- I. whereas on 23 May 2021, Ryanair flight FR4978, an international passenger flight between two EU capitals (Athens to Vilnius), was forcefully diverted to Minsk on the orders of Aliaksandr Lukashenka on the false pretence of a bomb threat, in breach of international conventions and jeopardising the safety of the more than 170 passengers and crew on board; whereas in Minsk, the Belarusian authorities detained passenger Raman Pratasevich, a Belarusian journalist and activist, and his companion Sofia Sapega;
- J. whereas in retaliation against the EU sanctions imposed in response to the forced diversion of Ryanair flight FR4978, Lukashenka publicly threatened to flood the EU, notably neighbouring Lithuania and Poland, with migrants and drugs; whereas this threat was implemented by instrumentalising migrants for political purposes: whereas the Lukashenka regime devised a scheme to ferry migrants from Iraq, Turkey and other countries to Minsk, and with the help of Belarusian border guards, facilitated their illegal crossing into the European Union; whereas this led to around 4 000 illegal migrants entering Lithuania, more than 1 400 entering Poland and around 400 entering Latvia; whereas Lithuania, Latvia and Poland declared a state of emergency at their borders with Belarus; whereas the number of irregular entries to the EU remains high

and attempts to cross illegally continue; whereas the Belarusian regime uses force to push migrants into EU territory and creates propaganda and disinformation accusing EU Member States of facilitating illegal migration to Belarus; whereas Lukashenka has suggested ending Belarus' obligation to accept returning migrants and has submitted a draft law on its suspension to the Belarusian Parliament; whereas at least five migrants have died from hypothermia and exhaustion and several migrants have become stranded for weeks at the EU's external border with Belarus; whereas Poland has restricted access for civil society organisations and media to the border area where the state of emergency was introduced; whereas the situation at the EU's border with Belarus remains tense, with many and diverse provocations from the side of Belarusian officers and soldiers;

- K. whereas in her State of the Union address of 15 September 2021, the Commission President called the instrumentalisation of migrants a hybrid attack by Belarus aimed at destabilising the EU;
- L. whereas on 3 August 2021, Vitaly Shishov, a founder of the Belarusian House in Ukraine, a group helping people who have left Belarus, was found hanged in a park in Kyiv;
- M. whereas on 17 September 2021, the Belarusian Prosecutor-General's Office suspended an investigation into the death of Raman Bandarenka;
- N. whereas after the recent fatal shooting in Minsk that claimed the lives of Andrei Zeltser and of a KGB agent, over hundred people that commented about the event on social media were arrested by the regime and made to give forced confessions;
- O. whereas after criticising her coaches, Belarusian athlete Krystina Timanovskaya was forced to leave the Tokyo Olympics early, and, due to fears for her safety, sought police protection at Tokyo Airport and accepted a humanitarian visa provided by Poland; whereas the International Olympic Committee (IOC) expelled Belarusian coaches Artur Shimak and Yury Maisevich from the Tokyo Olympics and opened an investigation;
- P. whereas in an already tense climate, in September 2021 Russia and Belarus held the massive Zapad 2021 joint military exercise involving 200 000 personnel, putting further pressure on the EU's borders; whereas Russia and Belarus established a joint air force and air defence training centre in Grodno, less than 15 kilometres from the border with Poland; whereas on 9 September 2021, Lukashenka and Vladimir Putin met in Moscow and announced the approval of 28 further programmes for integration at economic and fiscal level, as well as the creation of a 'joint defence sphere', which represents another step towards merging the Belarusian and Russian armed forces and the possible permanent deployment of Russian troops in Belarus; whereas Lukashenka has announced plans to acquire USD 1 billion worth of weapons from Russia by 2025, including S-400 missile systems; whereas on 9 September 2021, Lukashenka and Putin also agreed to set up a unified oil and gas market and to deepen economic integration, increasing the risk that Lukashenka will continue to trade off Belarus's sovereignty in exchange for more support from Russia;
- Q. whereas on 28 June 2021, the Belarusian regime suspended its participation in the Eastern Partnership initiative;

- R. whereas over the past year, the Lukashenka regime has ordered several diplomats and embassy staff of the EU and its Member States to leave the country, closing even more diplomatic channels of communication;
- S. whereas the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has decided to give Belarus access to nearly USD 1 billion in new Special Drawing Rights as part of a broader USD 650 billion allocation to all IMF members;
- T. whereas Belarus started the commercial operation of the Belarusian nuclear power plant (NPP) in Astravyets without addressing all the safety recommendations contained in the 2018 EU stress test report; whereas the Belarusian side is not transparent and does not provide trustworthy information about events at the NPP site, reconfirming that the Belarusian NPP is unsafe and poses a serious nuclear safety threat;
- U. whereas the Council adopted the fourth package of restrictive measures on Belarusian individuals and entities on 21 June 2021, following the forced and unlawful landing of Ryanair flight FR4978 in Minsk; whereas on 4 June 2021, the Council decided to introduce a ban on Belarusian carriers of all kinds entering EU airspace and accessing EU airports; whereas the European Union has so far imposed sanctions against 166 persons and 15 entities, including Aliaksandr Lukashenka, as well as targeted economic sanctions against several sectors of the Belarusian economy; whereas in 2020, the Belarusian economy recorded a real GDP decline amounting to 0,9 %, and whereas prognoses for 2021 estimate a further GDP decline of 2,7 %; whereas China continues to cooperate with and invest in Belarus, particularly in the China-Belarus Great Stone Industrial Park;
1. Continues to stand firmly in solidarity with the people of Belarus, as well as with the peaceful protesters who continue to stand up for a free and democratic Belarus; recalls that the European Union and its Member States did not recognise the results of the 2020 presidential election due to massive falsification and fabrication and do not recognise Aliaksandr Lukashenka as president of Belarus;
 2. Continues to condemn the repression, torture and ill-treatment of the peaceful people of Belarus, the suppression of the media and the internet, and the beating, arrest and intimidation of journalists, bloggers and other independent voices in Belarus; continues to call for the immediate and unconditional release and dropping of all charges against all political prisoners and persons arbitrarily detained and demands an immediate end to the violence and repression;
 3. Insists on the need to ensure fundamental freedoms and human rights, the rule of law and a functioning independent judiciary in Belarus, and the ceasing of all repression, persecution, ill-treatment, sexual and gender-based violence, enforced disappearances and torture, as well as on the immediate and permanent abolition of the death penalty; calls for an end to discrimination against women and vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities and LGBTIQI persons;
 4. Denounces the political trials of and condemns the harsh and unjust court sentences recently given out to opposition leaders Maria Kalesnikava and Maksim Znak and other political prisoners and detainees; deplores the fact that the court hearings were held behind closed doors and without due process of law and that EU and Member State diplomats were prevented from attending;

5. Continues to condemn the authorities' reprisals against the Human Rights Center Viasna and calls for the immediate and unconditional release and dropping of all charges against Ales Bialiatski, Valiantsin Stefanovich, Marfa Rabkova, Andrei Chepyuk, Leanid Sudalenka, Tatsyana Lasitsa, Maryia Tarasenko, Uladzimir Labkovich and other Viasna staff and volunteers;
6. Condemns the acts of repression and hostile actions carried out by the authorities against representatives of the Polish minority and against Polish-language schools in Belarus; calls, in this respect, for the immediate and unconditional release of Andželika Borys, journalist Andrzej Poczobut and other political prisoners;
7. Condemns the behaviour of Belarusian coaches Artur Shimak and Yury Maisevich at the Tokyo Olympics; recalls the prosecutions of Belarusian sportspeople for their participation in peaceful protests and the alleged ties between the Belarusian Ice Hockey Federation and the murder of Raman Bandarenka; calls on the IOC and other international sports committees and federations to follow their codes of ethics and conduct when engaging with representatives of Belarus;
8. Reiterates its call on the EEAS, the Commission and the EU Member States' national diplomatic representations in Belarus to closely monitor the situation of individual political prisoners in Belarus, to report to Parliament on this monitoring, to offer them support and to work to secure their release;
9. Calls for unequivocal support for the Belarusian democratic opposition in organising free and fair elections, under international observation by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the OSCE and underpinned by independent and free media and a strong civil society;
10. Considers the hijacking and forced landing of Ryanair flight FR4978 in Minsk to be an act of state terrorism and therefore calls for the EU to apply restrictive measures against the persons or entities in Belarus and Russia that are responsible, with a view to combating terrorism;
11. Urges the European Council to agree at its next meeting on 21-22 October 2021 on a comprehensive and strategic approach to sanctions against the Belarusian regime, which should include a shift from a step-by-step approach towards a more determined sanctions approach based on the systemic nature of repression and serious violations of human rights;
12. Welcomes the Council's decision to adopt the fourth package of restrictive measures and urges it to proceed with the fifth package of sanctions with the utmost urgency by focusing on individuals and entities involved in the crackdown and repression in Belarus and on individuals and entities involved in human trafficking, as well as to tackle circumventions that are already occurring;
13. Regrets the fact that the imposed economic sanctions have only had a partial effect on the Lukashenko regime and have not significantly affected important sectors such as the potash and petroleum products sectors; calls on the Council to further strengthen the EU's targeted economic sanctions, focusing on key Belarusian economic sectors and public and private companies supporting and funding the Lukashenko regime, to include additional sectors such as the steel, wood and chemicals sectors as well as all the remaining state-owned banks and key companies such as Belaruskali and Beltelecom in

the economic sanctions package, and to ban imports of products which are often produced by inmates in penal colonies; welcomes the additional sanctions imposed by the US, UK and Canada on the first anniversary of Belarus's fraudulent presidential elections; calls, therefore, for the EU to coordinate its measures with the United States, the G7 partners and other like-minded democracies;

14. Calls on the Member States to collectively declare Belarussian KGB officials on the soil of the European Union as *persona non grata*; Reiterates that the EU should pay special attention to financial flows from Belarus and invites the EU institutions to report to Parliament on the assets of Lukashenka's entourage and those linked to Lukashenka's corrupt oligarchs; reiterates its call for the EU to coordinate these actions with the United States, the G7 partners and other like-minded countries;
15. Deplores the expulsion of EU and Member State diplomats from Belarus, notably the Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Belarus and ambassadors and diplomats from Lithuania, Latvia and Poland; invites the Member States to recall for consultation their ambassadors from Minsk as a political signal to the Lukashenka regime and to refuse the accreditation of Belarussian diplomats in the EU; underlines that Belarussian MPs and officials should not be invited to any international or bilateral events; urges the EEAS to review its working methods and ensure an active role for the Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Belarus currently recalled to Brussels and to take additional measures to ensure a safe working environment for EU diplomats and EU delegation staff in Minsk, particularly protection against propaganda attacks by the Lukashenka regime;
16. Strongly condemns the Lukashenka regime's instrumentalisation of human beings for political purposes, in breach of international norms and Belarus's bilateral treaties with its EU neighbours; underlines that Belarus's state-sponsoring of illegal crossings at the EU's external border, coupled with a disinformation campaign, is a form of hybrid warfare aimed at intimidating and destabilising the EU; expresses strong solidarity with Lithuania, Poland and Latvia, as well as other EU Member States targeted by the Belarussian regime; reiterates the need for the countries most affected to effectively protect the EU's external borders, in compliance with relevant international law, in particular the Geneva Convention, as well as EU law on asylum, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights;
17. Welcomes the support provided by the Member States, Norway and the EU institutions and agencies, notably Europol, Frontex and the European Asylum Support Office, to the Member States affected by the migratory crisis created by the Belarussian regime and encourages them to continue their support, including through further allocation of EU emergency aid, and invites those who have not yet taken advantage of it to do so; calls on the Member States and EU institutions to deal urgently with the multidimensional crisis at the Belarussian border, to help migrants stuck at the EU's borders with Belarus and to provide them with the necessary support; expresses concern about the lack of transparency at the Polish-Belarussian border and urges the Polish authorities to ensure, in a transparent way, that any legislation, policy or practice at the Polish-Belarussian border complies with EU law and to secure access to the border region for civil society organisations and media as well as to cooperate with Frontex to jointly resolve the ongoing crisis; calls for the EU, its Member States and international organisations to step up their efforts towards dismantling these state-ordered human trafficking flows, including by placing diplomatic pressure on the countries of origin of migrants and by imposing sanctions on Belarussian officials, individuals and entities involved, as well as

on international criminal networks operating on the EU's territory responsible for transfers to final destinations; highlights that Belarus has recently suspended its visa regime with Pakistan, Jordan, Egypt and South Africa, enabling visa-free travel from these countries to Belarus;

18. Calls on the Commission, the Council and the Member States to adopt a common approach to this situation based on relevant EU and international law and on the principles of solidarity, transparency, accountability and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; calls on the Commission to urgently table targeted legislative proposals providing Member States with the necessary safeguards to swiftly and effectively react and respond to migration instrumentalisation campaigns by non-EU countries, in particular by ensuring strong and effective protection of the EU's external borders and by providing effective measures to prevent irregular crossings as well as elaborating ways to stop the abuse of the asylum system by any hostile third country or criminal network;
19. Is concerned over the deaths of people at the border between Belarus and the EU and expresses its sympathy to the families and relatives of the deceased; calls on the authorities of Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and other affected Member States to ensure that EU asylum and return law and international human rights law are respected also during the emergency situation, including access to asylum and access of media, civil society organisations and legal aid providers to the border area to the largest extent possible, and to take into account the guidance by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and bodies of the Council of Europe; calls on the Commission as the guardian of the Treaties to ensure compliance with relevant EU law;
20. Calls on the Member States to improve their cooperation on border management, the fight against human trafficking, cigarette smuggling and other security challenges created or aggravated by the Belarusian regime; supports the Commission proposal to suspend certain articles of the EU's Visa Facilitation Agreement with the Republic of Belarus targeting specific categories of officials linked to the Lukashenka regime, with no impact on ordinary citizens of Belarus; calls for the broadening of the list of persons concerned and for consideration to already be given to including categories of individuals that may be targeted by individual restrictive measures as part of future sanctions packages;
21. Regrets the IMF's unconditional special drawing rights allocation of USD 910 million, which will not serve the people of Belarus, but rather the interests of the illegitimate leader of the country; calls on the Member States to coordinate with international partners in multilateral organisations such as the IMF to restrict the disbursement of funds to the Lukashenka regime and freeze all cooperation with it; takes note of the continuous investments by non-democratic countries, notably Russia and China, in Belarus;
22. Reiterates the urgency of exposing Russia's support for Lukashenka's brutal crackdown on the people of Belarus, as well as its involvement in the hybrid actions of Lukashenka's regime against the EU, including the use of migrants for political purposes, and holds the Kremlin accountable for such actions;
23. Notes with concern the aggressive scenario of the 'Zapad 2021 military exercise and the poor opportunities to observe it; reiterates that this exercise, as well as other, similar large-scale exercises, underline Russia's offensive posturing and determination to use

its capabilities in a hostile fashion; reiterates its call for EU strategic autonomy and a genuine European Defence Union as part of a strengthened NATO;

24. Condemns the continuous dealings between Lukashenka and Vladimir Putin to prepare road maps for greater integration between Belarus and Russia, including the progressive militarisation of Belarus, and sees this as a violation of the sovereignty of Belarus, as the Belarusian people are being deprived of their right to determine the future of their country; highlights the illegality of Lukashenka's rule and rejects all agreements made by Lukashenka on behalf of the Belarusian state, notably after the expiry of his presidential term on 5 November 2020; reiterates that the EU has to make it clear that if Russia continues its current policy on Belarus, the EU will have to introduce additional containment and deterrence measures on Russia; asks that the EU institutions report periodically to Parliament on the Kremlin's interference in Belarus, including its exploitation of the situation with a view to deeper political, military and economic control of Belarus;
25. Expresses its disappointment at the fact that until now the EU has not managed to develop a comprehensive strategy towards the Belarusian regime, and urges the Council, the Commission and the VP/HR to devise a coherent and comprehensive strategy towards Belarus, based on current emergency support to victims of repression, strategic and long-term political, technical and financial support to Belarusian civil society, human rights defenders, independent media, trade unions and democratic forces in the country and abroad, cooperation with neighbouring countries on urgent humanitarian issues, close coordination with international partners and relevant multilateral organisations (e.g. UN, OSCE) as well as international donors, and joint international action to address impunity; calls for the EEAS to take the lead in coordinating such a coherent policy with the Member States and other EU institutions;
26. Urges the Commission, the Council, the VP/HR and the Member States to continue raising the situation in Belarus in all relevant European and international organisations, in particular the OSCE, the UN and its specialised bodies, with the aim of enhancing international action on the situation in Belarus and overcoming the obstruction of Russia and other countries to such action;
27. Continues to support the Belarusian people in their legitimate demands and aspirations for free and fair elections, fundamental freedoms and human rights, democratic representation, and political participation in a free and sovereign Belarus;
28. Praises the systematic and consistent work of Belarusian democratic forces in Belarus and in exile, in particular the leader of the democratic opposition, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, the Coordination Council and National Anti-Crisis Management; reiterates the urgent need to maintain and expand contacts and cooperation with these forces; welcomes, in this context, the decision of Lithuania to grant official accreditation to the Belarusian democratic representation in Vilnius and invites the remaining Member States to follow suit; calls for the EU to provide its good services to support the establishment of a democratic Belarus representation office in Brussels;
29. Calls for the EU to engage on an operational level with the representatives of the democratic forces of Belarus in order to conclude work on the adoption of a roadmap aimed at the implementation of a EUR 3 billion comprehensive plan of economic support to a future democratic Belarus in areas such as advocacy capacity building, reform capacity building, investment management capacity building and state

governance capacity building for the democratic forces of Belarus; invites the EU to start the necessary preparations for the dialogue with the democratic forces of Belarus and to report periodically to Parliament on the progress made, including on the adoption of an EU strategy on its future relations with a democratic Belarus and on a comprehensive set of actions to prepare the democratic forces of Belarus for the implementation of this plan;

30. Reiterates its call for the representatives of democratic Belarus to be officially invited to the upcoming Eastern Partnership Summit and for them to be included in high-level bilateral and preparatory meetings at EU and national level, as well as in parliamentary sessions and interparliamentary meetings with the European and national parliaments; reiterates the importance of establishing official groups dedicated to Belarus in all national parliaments of the EU Member States, Eastern Neighbourhood and G7 countries; calls for increased engagement with and presence of representatives of Belarusian civil society and democratic opposition in the multilateral bodies of the Eastern Partnership, in particular the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum and the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly;
31. Recalls its previous initiative for a high-level mission, involving former high-ranking European officials, to explore every possible avenue to stop the violence and free political prisoners and which could help create a conducive environment for an inclusive domestic political dialogue in Belarus; Reiterates its call on the Commission and the VP/HR to organise, together with international partners, a high-level 'Future of Democratic Belarus' international conference on the resolution of the crisis in Belarus and the pledging of a multi-billion euro financial package to support future reform efforts and the restructuring of the Belarusian economy; asks the Commission to inform Parliament about the progress in achieving this;
32. Underlines the need for a comprehensive investigation into the crimes committed by the Lukashenka regime against the people of Belarus, including the murder of Raman Bandarenka and of other Belarusian citizens; awaits the results of the Ukrainian authorities' investigation into the death of Vitaly Shishov; calls on the Member States to actively apply the universal jurisdiction principle and prepare court cases against Belarusian officials responsible for or complicit in violence and repression, including Aliaksandr Lukashenka;
33. Commits to the effective functioning of the European Parliament's Platform on the fight against impunity in Belarus and to coordinating a timely international reaction to developments in Belarus; invites the Platform to outline at its forthcoming meeting the way forward for the EU to contribute to a litigation strategy and participate alongside partners in the international trial process, including universal jurisdiction, for convicting Aliaksandr Lukashenka and members of his regime personally for the crimes committed against the people of Belarus on a massive scale; calls, in particular, for the platform to consider bringing the case of Belarus to the International Court of Justice on the basis of the violations of the Chicago Convention, the Montreal Convention and the UN Convention against Torture committed by Lukashenka's regime;
34. Reminds all EU businesses operating in Belarus of its previous call to exercise particular diligence and uphold their responsibility to respect human rights, in accordance with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: asks them to refrain from any new investment and to publicly protest to the Belarusian authorities against the continuing repression of workers and citizens in general;

35. Urges the Commission, the EEAS and the EU Member States to increase the direct support to the Belarusian opposition, civil society, human rights defenders and independent media organisations inside and outside of Belarus; underlines the importance of maintaining relations with these individuals and organisations despite the Belarusian regime's announcement of its withdrawal from the Eastern Partnership; commits to stepping up its own democracy support activities; reiterates its call for a targeted EU assistance programme to help civil society, independent media, academia, and the Belarusian opposition in exile, as well as victims of political repression and police violence and those fleeing the oppressive regime;
36. Calls on the Commission, the Member States and the EEAS to cooperate with international partners, such as the OSCE Moscow Mechanism and the UN Human Rights Council, as well as human rights defenders and civil society on the ground, to ensure the monitoring, documentation and reporting of human rights violations and subsequent accountability and justice for victims; welcomes and supports the establishment of the International Accountability Platform for Belarus and calls on the EU institutions and Member States to support its functioning, as well that of the UNHRC and other international initiatives for holding perpetrators to account; supports further discussions about a possible international tribunal for human rights violations in Belarus to be set up in The Hague;
37. Highlights the tremendous importance of the establishment of people's embassies of Belarus worldwide and urges the Commission and the Member States to provide further support to protect the rights and interests of Belarusian citizens abroad and the interests of a democratic Belarus, for example by exploring ways to fund the people's embassies of Belarus;
38. Encourages the Member States to further simplify the procedures for obtaining visas and residence for those fleeing Belarus for political reasons or for those who require medical treatment as a result of violence perpetrated against them, and to offer them and their families the necessary support and assistance; calls on the Member States and the Commission to offer scholarships to Belarusian students and scholars expelled from universities and imprisoned for their pro-democratic stance;
39. Stresses the importance of addressing the nuclear safety threats posed by the Belarusian NPP in Astravyets; insists that Belarus engage on the nuclear safety of the Belarusian NPP in complete transparency and commit to the full implementation of the recommendations made in the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group peer review of the plant; until that is the case, it supports banning imports of energy from the Belarusian NPP into the EU market and reflecting this position in the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism;
40. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the authorities of the Republic of Belarus and of the Russian Federation, and to the representatives of the Belarusian democratic opposition.