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Delegation for relations with Belarus

Joint statement by:

- the Chair of the Delegation for relations with Belarus, MEP Juozas OLEKAS, and
- the European Parliament's Standing Rapporteur on Belarus, MEP Petras AUŠTREVICIUS

on the occasion of Belarus' Freedom Day

Brussels, 25 March 2023 – *"Today, our thoughts are with the people of Belarus on the occasion of Freedom Day. 105 years ago, on 25 March 1918, the Belarusian People's Republic was proclaimed in Minsk. Although the Republic succumbed the next year under the assault of the Bolsheviks, it remains cherished in the memory of many Belarusians as a glorious episode in their country's history.*

This Republic's legacy resonates today as the dictator who stole the 2020 presidential election, Aliaksandr Lukashenka, is trading Belarus' sovereign and national interests for keeping his personal power inside the country, even if it means becoming a mere vassal of the Kremlin and an accomplice in Vladimir Putin's atrocious war of aggression against Ukraine. Lukashenka's regime once tried to fool Europe with its so-called 'multi-vector foreign policy', but the masks are off now. In order to please his masters and sponsors, Lukashenka has not hesitated to turn his back on Belarusian history, cultural heritage and language.

As all-out repression against dissenting voices continues unabated, we stand in solidarity with all those who fight to live in a free, sovereign and democratic Belarus, and with all the political prisoners who have been deprived of their liberty solely because they wanted to exercise their fundamental rights or showed their attachment to their home country.

We strongly believe in the European future of the Belarusian nation and hope that it will achieve its well-being together with us.

Zhyve Belarus!"

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