



Joint statement by:

- the Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, MEP David McALLISTER
- 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 parliamentary and local “elections” held in Belarus on 25 February 2024

Brussels, 26 February 2024 - *“On Sunday 25 February, so called parliamentary and local “elections” were held in Belarus, the first elections since the fraudulent 2020 presidential ballot that triggered an unprecedented wave of mass protests around the country.*

We have been following closely the developments preceding the parliamentary and the local “elections” held on 25 February.

We regret that the “elections” took place without the participation of independent local or international observers such as an OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) observation mission.

It is clear that elections held in current restrictive and repressive environment impeded Belarusian citizens to exercise their fundamental right to cast a free and unbiased vote for a candidate of their choice. The “election” process failed to meet basic democratic standards.

Therefore, we reiterate the position of the European Parliament expressed in its resolution of 8 February 2024, and call for the EU, its Member States, and the international community not to recognise the legitimacy of those who were “elected” in the ballot.

We stand in solidarity with victims of arbitrary persecutions and repression and send our condolences to the relatives of the latest victim of the Lukashenka regime, political prisoner Ihar Lednik. We reiterate our unequivocal support for the people of Belarus in their legitimate demands for fundamental freedoms and human rights, democratic representation, political participation and the right to elect their representatives in free and fair elections.

We reaffirm our commitment to continue working closely with Belarusian democratic forces led by Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, human rights defenders, civil society

organisations, independent media and journalists, while acknowledging their legitimate aspiration for a European future.

We urge the regime in Belarus to abide by its international obligations and to immediately and unconditionally release all political prisoners and the arbitrary detained people.”

For further information contact:

Eastern Partnership and Russia Unit, tel. +32 2 283 26 40, e-mail: D-BY@europarl.europa.eu