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## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on statements by the Council and Commission

pursuant to Rule 103(2) of the Rules of Procedure

by Laima Liucija Andrikienė, Árpád Duka-Zólyomi, James Elles, Alfred Gomolka, Tunne Kelam, Bogdan Klich, Barbara Kudrycka, Aldis Kušks, Rihards Pīks, Bernd Posselt, Jacek Emil Saryusz-Wolski, Charles Tannock and Karl von Wogau on behalf of the PPE-DE Group

on the situation of minorities in Belarus

**European Parliament resolution on the situation of minorities in Belarus**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Belarus,
  - having regard in particular to its resolution of 10 March 2005 on Belarus<sup>1</sup>, and its resolution of 7 July 2005 on the political situation and the independence of the media in Belarus<sup>2</sup>,
  - having regard to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights' resolution of 14 April 2005 on the situation of human rights in Belarus,
  - having regard, in particular, to the 'EU action plan for promoting democracy in Belarus' adopted by the European Parliament's Delegation for relations with Belarus on 23 February 2005,
  - having regard to the communication from the Commission of 12 May 2004 on the European Neighbourhood Policy (COM(2004)0373),
  - having regard to the EU sanctions adopted on 2 July 2004 placed on Belarusian officials following the disappearance of three Belarusian opposition leaders and one journalist,
  - having regard to Rule 103 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas, instead of improving, the situation in Belarus has further deteriorated to a situation in which human rights are violated with contempt, the Lower House is deprived of its legislative rights, and economic life is ruled by the President; whereas these violations include imprisonment of, and other forms of repression against, members of the democratic opposition,
- B. whereas over the past few years several political parties, 22 independent newspapers, more than 50 pro-democracy NGOs of different levels and different political orientations, and several educational establishments have been closed for 'technical' reasons; whereas it was clear, however, that in all cases these organisations were being punished for criticising the President and his policies,
- C. whereas in April 2005, the UN Commission on Human Rights criticised Belarus on account of persistent reports of harassment and closure of NGOs, national minority organisations, independent media outlets, opposition political parties, independent trade unions and religious organisations, and the harassment of individuals engaged in democratic activities, including the independent media,

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted P6\_TA(2005)0080

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted P6\_TA(2005)0295

- D. whereas politically motivated arrests and trials of activists in the democratic movement and independent journalists, as well as deportations of foreign citizens, are continually taking place in Belarus,
- E. whereas on 12 May 2005, the authorities of the Union of Poles in Belarus were declared illegitimate by the Belarusian Ministry of Justice; whereas a printing plant, under instructions from the government, refused to print the Polish weekly 'Głos znad Niemna' and fake issues were printed under the umbrella of the government,
- F. whereas on 27 August 2005, the Lukashenko regime called a board meeting of the Union of Poles in Belarus to force the resignation of the democratic, and legally elected, leadership in order to replace them by a board compliant with the regime,
- G. whereas the situation of other minorities, including the Roma, and religious minorities has been steadily deteriorating, with Protestant churches being closed and the Reformed Evangelical Church being banned,
- H. whereas all cable operators are persecuted for transmitting foreign channels not approved by the Belarusian government, and whereas on this basis Belarusian cable TV operators were banned from broadcasting all Ukrainian channels as well as the Polish channel 'Polonia',
1. Strongly condemns the Belarus regime's indiscriminate attacks on the media, on minority and human rights activists, members of the opposition, religious leaders, and any person who attempts freely to voice criticism of the President and the regime, as manifested through arbitrary arrests, ill-treatment of detainees, disappearances, politically motivated persecution and other acts of repression that flout the basic principles of democracy and the rule of law;
  2. Condemns the Belarus regime's amendment to Decree 460 on the regulations for accepting foreign aid, dated 17 August 2005, which extends the list of objectives for which external aid cannot be accepted; notes that it is now forbidden to accept and use international aid for 'unconstitutional purposes', to overthrow authorities, interfere with the internal affairs of Belarus, prepare elections or referendums, organise meetings, rallies, pickets or strikes, or prepare and distribute propaganda materials; points out that it is impossible to organise conferences, seminars and meetings of any kind using aid funds from abroad;
  3. Condemns the regime's decision of 22 August 2005 to ban the Reformed Evangelical Church, which had been present in Belarus for more than 400 years; points out that the Reformed Evangelical Church was outlawed because the community had no legal address, nor could it have registered one, because the authorities had previously evicted it from all of its prayer houses, which is in contravention of the Belarusian law on the freedom of belief;
  4. Condemns the government's action against the Union of Poles in Belarus as an attempt to curb the largest NGO and one of the few not controlled by the government; recalls that

respect for minority rights also extends to the freedom of association and recognition of the elected statutory bodies of the organisation concerned; deplores the fact that the government took control of the 'Głos znad Niemna' newspaper;

5. Condemns the continuous persecution of activists from the Polish minority who want to preserve the independence of their association; points out that the most active are harassed by repeated summons to the prosecutor's office and the police; notes that Angelika Borys, the leader of the Union of Poles in Belarus (ZPB) has been interrogated more than 50 times in recent weeks, and that Tadeusz Gawin, a founding member and current Vice-President of ZPB, was sentenced to 30 days in prison;
6. Condemns the sentencing of ZPB activists Jozef Parzecki, Wiesław Kiewlak, Andrzej Pisalnik and Andrzej Poczobut for up to two years' imprisonment on false criminal charges;
7. Condemns the Belarus authorities for not granting entrance visas to a delegation of Members of the European Parliament who went on a fact-finding mission on 8 August 2005;
8. Condemns the Belarus Regime's complete marginalisation of the Roma minority in Belarus, whose basic civic rights have been curtailed; strongly condemns hate speeches against the Roma population in the official media;
9. Calls on the Council and Commission to create a programme of scholarships, visits and traineeships for NGOs, human rights and minority activists;
10. Believes that if the Belarusian authorities fail to improve the situation in respect of the freedom of speech, of assembly and of religious freedom and thus allowing for its further deterioration, the Commission, the Council and Parliament should initiate the procedure to add more names to the visa-ban list of Belarusian authorities involved in persecution;
11. Emphasises once again that the further development of EU relations with Belarus will also continue to depend on the progress made towards democratisation and reform in the country, access for Belarusians to an objective, free and transparent media, as well as respect for minority and religious rights and freedoms;
12. Calls on the Commission and the Council to support the democratically elected board of the Union of Poles in Belarus, as well as the boards of other democratically elected NGOs which are also subject to repression by the Lukashenko regime;
13. Calls for the creation of an ad-hoc high level delegation to be sent on a fact-finding mission to Belarus, and to report its findings to Parliament;
14. Calls on the Commission to accelerate the opening of a permanent representation of the European Union in Minsk, so as to be better able to distribute information, coordinate projects, and monitor the situation in Belarus;
15. Calls on the Council and the Commission to raise the issue of Belarus with the Russian

authorities so as to define a common responsibility for bringing about concrete democratic changes in Belarus;

16. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the parliaments and governments of the Member States, and the Parliamentary Assemblies of the OSCE and the Council of Europe.