

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

Session document

13.2.2006

B6-0109/06

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

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

by Bogdan Adam Klich and Charles Tannock

on behalf of the PPE-DE Group

on the situation in Belarus prior to the presidential elections of 19 March

B6-0109

European Parliament resolution on the situation in Belarus prior to the presidential elections of 19 March

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Belarus,
 - having regard, in particular, to its resolution of 5 July 2001 on Belarus, adopted prior to the 2001 presidential elections, and to the reports of the Parliamentary troika (OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly and European Parliament) published after the 2000 general election (30 January 2001) and the 2001 presidential election (4 October 2001),
 - having regard to the OSCE/ODIHR's election needs assessment mission report of 31 January 2006,
 - having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the Belarus presidential elections will take place on 19 March 2006,
- B. whereas President Lukashenko has extended his term off office by removing an article in the constitution which limits the post of President to a maximum of two consecutive periods of five years,
- C. whereas both the OSCE and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe have concluded that neither the parliamentary nor the presidential elections of 2000 and 2001, nor the parliamentary elections and referendum of October 2004 were free, fair or transparent, and that they were preceded by arbitrary action by the government against the political opposition, independent media and election-observing organisations,
- D. whereas, instead of improving, the situation in Belarus has further deteriorated, to the point where 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 members of the democratic opposition and other forms of repression against them,
- E. whereas the EU has repeatedly condemned the arrest of prominent opposition leaders by the Lukashenko government while no progress has been made on the unsolved cases of a number of disappeared persons,
- F. whereas over the past few years more than 50 democratic NGOs of different levels and different political orientations, over 20 independent mass media entities, several educational establishments and several political parties have been closed down for 'technical' reasons;

1. Deplores the continuing deterioration of the political situation and the continuing violations of the civil and human rights of the Belarusian people; strongly denounces the indiscriminate attacks on the media, journalists, members of the opposition, human rights activists and minorities; condemns the decision of the Supreme Court of Belarus to liquidate the Belarusian Union of Youth and Children's Public Association (RADA);
2. Is deeply concerned at the fact that, according to the most recent reports assessing the conditions for the presidential elections, the preparations are taking place against a background of increased constraints on civil society, independent media and the opposition political parties, which, following the 2004 parliamentary elections, have no representation in the Belarusian parliament;
3. Expresses its solidarity with all Belarusians who strive for an independent, open and democratic Belarus based on the rule of law;
4. Calls on the Belarus authorities to guarantee that the presidential elections of 19 March 2006 will be free, fair, equal, accountable and transparent; gives its support to all candidates who are committed to the principle of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and minorities;
5. Encourages the people of Belarus to participate in the forthcoming presidential elections; recognises the great importance of these elections, whose outcome may decisively influence the future of Belarus and its reintegration into the international democratic community;
6. Strongly urges the central election committee to provide equal access to polling stations for representatives of all candidates during the elections;
7. Calls on the Belarus authorities to provide all presidential candidates with equal and impartial access to state broadcasting and media, in order to guarantee equality of opportunity in the upcoming campaign;
8. Calls on the Council Presidency to convince the Belarus authorities to allow an EP delegation to observe the elections of 19 March 2006;
9. Supports the OSCE's recommendation concerning observation of the election process country-wide from mid-February until it is completed, involving all necessary means to guarantee that the observers will be able to carefully follow the election day procedures, including voting, counting of votes and tabulation of results at all levels of the administration;
10. Emphasises once again that the further development of the EU's relations with Belarus will continue to depend on the progress made towards democratisation and reform in the country, and in particular on transparent and fair presidential elections;

11. Considers that should the Belarusian authorities fail to ensure free and fair presidential elections, the Commission, the Council and Parliament should initiate the procedure to expand the visa-ban list of representatives of the Belarusian authorities, particularly for those responsible for any falsifications during the upcoming elections;
12. Considers that the sanctions against President Lukashenko's regime should also include the freezing of assets of Belarusian authorities abroad;
13. Is encouraged by the Commission's transfer of EUR 2 m from TACIS to the European Human Rights and Democracy Fund, thus allowing for greater flexibility and effectiveness in relations with Belarusian civil society;
14. Calls on the Council and 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;
15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, the Governments and Parliaments of the Member States, the Government and Parliament of Belarus, and the Parliamentary Assemblies of the OSCE and the Council of Europe.