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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 André Brie and Jonas Sjöstedt

on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

on Belarus in the run-up to the presidential elections on 19 March

European Parliament resolution on Belarus in the run-up to the presidential elections on 19 March

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Recommendation 1734(2006) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe,
 - having regard its previous resolutions on the situation in Belarus,
 - having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas presidential elections will take place in Belarus on 19 March 2006,
 - B. whereas the election campaign does not meet international standards, particularly as regards the media,
 - C. concerned by the closing-down of several independent newspapers, and particularly the largest daily independent, *Narodnaya Volya*, and by the increased pressure on independent Internet sites,
 - D. stressing that under these circumstances it is hardly possible to have a fair and transparent pre-election campaign and elections,
 - D. noting that there are several candidates of several political forces being nominated,
 - E. recalling that the EU and the Council of Europe has expressed criticism of the democratic and human rights situation in Belarus on several occasions, but without any positive reaction from the Belarusian side,
 - F. whereas the EU has repeatedly condemned the arrest of prominent opposition leaders,
 - G. recalling that freedom of expression and association and the right to demonstration are inalienable human rights,
1. Urges the Belarus Government to ensure that the elections are held in full compliance with international standards, and makes reminder that the pre-election campaign must provide equal opportunities to all political forces,
 2. Urges the Belarus Government to take positive steps to ensure that pluralistic information can be provided, in particular to ensure equal accessibility to the media during the campaign for all the candidates participating in the presidential elections,
 3. Calls on the Belarus authorities to immediately release all political prisoners and guarantee the freedom of opinion and expression,

4. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Belarus Government and Parliament.