

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

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*Session document*

19.2.2008

B6-0098/2008

## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

with request for inclusion in the agenda for the debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 115 of the Rules of Procedure

by Elisabeth Schroedter, Milan Horáček

on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

on human rights' violations in Belarus

**European Parliament resolution on human rights' violations in Belarus**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Belarus, in particular to its resolution of 3 April 2006,
  - having regard to the November 2006 European Commission declaration of the European Union's readiness to renew its relationship with Belarus and its people within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP),
  - having regard to its Sakharov Prize for freedom of thought, which was awarded in December 2004 to the Belarusian Association of Journalists and in December 2006 to Aleksander Milinkevich,
  - having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the European Parliament has repeatedly condemned the failed Presidential, Parliamentary, and local elections in Belarus and has pointed out that the Lukashenko regime lacks all democratic legitimacy and continues as the last dictatorship in Europe,
- B. whereas the European Parliament has welcomed the decision of the Council to add President Lukashenko to the visa ban list and has called on the Commission to expand the list to include representatives of the Belarus local, regional, national and academic authorities who are involved in breaching the human rights and political freedoms of Belarusian citizens,
- C. whereas the European Parliament has called on the Commission and the Council to make proposals to put further pressure on Lukashenko's regime in international organisations,
- D. whereas the European Parliament particularly condemned the fact that local democracy, which is the cornerstone of any democratic governance and which expresses the will of ordinary people to attain their genuine hopes and expectations, has been disregarded and neglected in Belarus,
- E. whereas Belarus abstained on the UN General Assembly's Third Committee's resolution calling for a global moratorium on the death penalty, whereas the Belarus authorities used this position as a way of stepping up pressure on their own citizens,
- F. whereas positive developments on the establishment of the European Commission's Delegation in Minsk have taken place recently,

1. Deeply regrets that contrary to the principles and the commitments of the OSCE of which Belarus is a member, the situation of democracy, human rights and rule of law is further deteriorating in the country;
2. Notes that constant arbitrary arrests of the civil society and opposition activists, clampdown on independent media and the continuous use of death penalty blatantly contradict the recent rhetoric of Belarusian government of their wish to improve the relations with the European Union; stresses that in violating the fundamental rights of Belarusian people the government of Mr Lukashenka cannot expect to become a reliable partner for dialogue with the EU;
3. Takes note of the recent release of several democratic opposition activists, including the leaders of the Young Front; at the same time urges the Belarus authorities to release immediately all remaining political prisoners, including Alyaksandr Kazulin and Andrey Klimaw, and to put a complete stop to the use of intimidation, harassment, targeted arrests and politically motivated prosecutions against the activists of the democratic opposition and of the civil society of Belarus;
4. Reminds the Belarus authorities that the release of all political prisoners is one of the key conditions for Belarus to renew its relationship with the EU; takes note of the recent release of several democratic opposition activists including the leaders of the Young Front, at the same time urges the Belarus authorities to release immediately all remaining political prisoners;
5. Condemns the fact that Belarus is one of the last countries in Europe which is still practising the death penalty, which runs counter to European values; calls on the government of Belarus to establish a moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty;
6. Recalls that in November 2006 the Europe Union declared its readiness to renew its relationship with Belarus and its people within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) as soon as the Belarusian Government demonstrates respect for democratic values and for the basic right of the Belarusian people whereas the question of the abolition of the death penalty should be one of the top priorities;
7. Welcomes the decision taken by President Lukashenko to authorise his deputy foreign minister to sign an agreement authorising the establishment of a European Commission delegation in the country;
8. Underlines that in order to engage in any substantial dialogue with the EU, Belarus needs to implement the remaining eleven conditions laid down in the non-paper *What the EU could bring to Belarus*;
9. Calls on the Commission and the Council to take further steps towards the facilitation and liberalisation of visa procedures for Belarusian citizens, as only such action can help to fulfil the main goal of EU policy towards Belarus, i.e. to facilitate and intensify people-to-people contacts and to democratise that country; urges in this context to reduce the cost of Schengen visas for Belarusian citizens, which is the only way to prevent Belarus and its citizens from becoming increasingly isolated;

10. Calls on the Commission, the Council and the international community as a whole to extend more support to the civil society of Belarus and, in particular, to increase financial aid to the independent media, to the non- governmental organizations and to Belarusian students studying abroad; welcomes the financial support given by the Commission to the European Humanities University in Vilnius (Lithuania);
11. Expresses solidarity with the democratic opposition of Belarus and all Belarusian citizens who strive for an independent, open and democratic Belarus based on the rule of law; encourages the leaders of the opposition to demonstrate unity and resolve in the upcoming parliamentary elections;
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the parliaments and governments of the Member States, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Parliamentary Assemblies of the OSCE and the Council of Europe, and the Belarus authorities.