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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 Janusz Onyszkiewicz, Eugenijus Gentvilas, Anne E. Jensen

on behalf of the ALDE Group

on arrests of political opponents in Belarus

European Parliament resolution on arrests of political opponents in Belarus

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Belarus,
 - having regards to the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly resolution 1606 on the abuse of criminal justice system in Belarus of 15 April 2008,
 - having regard to the Commission's statement of 26 March 2008 on the arrests of Belarusian citizens in Minsk on 25 March 2008,
 - having regard to the EU Presidency statement on the recent developments in the relations between Belarus and the United States of 6 May 2008,
 - having regard to Rule 155(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas situation of human rights in Belarus continues to be the source of profound concern,
 - B. whereas, following the peaceful demonstration on the occasion of Freedom day on 25 March 2008, Belarusian security forces have resorted to the excessive use of force and arrests of approximately 100 demonstrators including young activists, independent journalists and Lithuanian TV reporters,
 - C. whereas the long sentences recently imposed on Andrey Kim and Syarhey Parsyukevich for allegedly using violence against policemen are the latest examples of the repression meted out by the authorities in Belarus against political opponents,
 - D. whereas a number of young activists were sentenced to 2 years of "corrective labour" for participating in an "illegal" demonstration,
 - E. whereas the continued detention of Aliaksandr Kazulin epitomises Belarus' disregard for its obligations to respect the human rights of its citizens,
 - F. whereas there have been some positive developments in the relations between the EU and Belarus, such as the agreement to open the European Commission delegation office in Minsk, the release of a number of political prisoners and the non-interference in the commemoration of the 22nd Chrenobyl accident anniversary in Minsk on 26 April 2008 but whereas these promising trends have regrettably been reversed by the most recent actions of the Belarusian authorities,
1. Urgently calls on the Belarusian authorities to:
 - a) free political prisoners and respect the rights of the citizens of Belarus, including the

right to peaceful assembly, the freedom of association, the right to freedom of opinion and expression and the right not to be subjected to arbitrary arrest and detention;

b) repeal law No 71-3 of 15 December 2005 and in particular Article 193 - 1 of the Criminal Code criminalising activities of non-registered associations;

c) introduce structural changes to the criminal justice system in order to bring it in line with international human rights standards and principles of the rule of law;

2. Calls on the Member States of the European Union to continue intervening with the authorities on behalf of political prisoners and their families, to maintain the imposed targeted sanctions and update the list of Belarusian officials including university deans, judges and members of a regional election commissions responsible for serious human rights abuses and falsifications during elections;
3. Calls on the Commission and the Member States of the European Union to continue and extend their support for independent Belarusian electronic and printed media, including independent Belarusian broadcasts, in order to provide access to independent, truthful information especially during the election campaign;
4. Requests the Council and the Commission to extend more support to the victims of human rights violations in Belarus; is of the opinion that increased financial assistance to the civil society organisations, in particular free media, is necessary for the promotion of human rights in the country;
5. Is preoccupied by the fact that these recent arrests and suppression of democratic opposition are taking place in the run-up to the upcoming parliamentary elections in Belarus in September of this year;
6. Reminds the Belarusian authorities that renewed relationship with the EU will only be possible if conditions are created for a free and fair ballot, in line with international democratic standards, all political prisoners are unconditionally released, registration is allowed and free access to the media is ensured to the candidates of the democratic opposition and invitation is issued to a fully - fledged international observation mission to Belarus;
7. Expresses its solidarity with all Belarusian citizens and united democratic opposition of Belarus and is greatly concerned over the repeated detention and trial on 15 May 2008 of its leader, Aliaksandr Milinkevich;
8. Expresses its profound regret over the unjustified and unwarranted expulsion of the United States diplomats from Belarus;
9. 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 Belarusian authorities.