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*Plenary sitting*

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8.3.2011

B7-0180/2011

## **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 122 of the Rules of Procedure

on Belarus - in particular the cas of Ales Mikhalevic and Natalia Radin

**Marietje Schaake, Leonidas Donskis, Kristiina Ojuland, Ramon Tremosa i Balcells, Sonia Alfano**

on behalf of the ALDE Group

**European Parliament resolution on Belarus - in particular the cas of Ales Mikhalevic and Natalia Radin**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Belarus, in particular that of 20 January 2011 on Belarus,
  - having regard to the Council decision of 31 January 2011 (2011/69/CFSP) on restrictive measures against certain officials of Belarus,
  - having regard to the Conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council of 31 January 2011,
  - having regard to the final report on presidential election in Belarus by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA) of 22 February 2011,
  - having regard to the statement by the EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the conviction and sentencing of Belarusian opposition representative, 18 February 2011 (A 059/11),
  - having regard to Rule 122(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Belarus is a European country and an important EU neighbour and its people have a strong European vocation,
- B. whereas Belarus is bound by international commitments to the principles of international law and to fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms,
- C. whereas Belarus is a party to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,
- D. whereas, according to the OSCE PA and OSCE/ODIHR final report on the presidential election in Belarus, the elections failed to meet OSCE commitment standards,
- E. whereas the police crackdown on the demonstration of 19 December 2010 and further measures taken by the law enforcement against democratic opposition, free media and civil society activists are yet to be investigated and have been condemned by the European Parliament, EU High Representative, UN General Secretary,
1. Condemns the ongoing detention and continuous prosecution of democratic opposition, free media and civil society activists;

2. Condemns the repression and harassment of civil society activists, which followed Election Day, including mass searches in the private apartments, offices of the media outlets and the civil society organisations, expulsions from the universities and work places;
3. Condemns the reported use of torture techniques by the police and KGB services against opposition activists and journalists, in particular in the case of a presidential candidate, Ales Mikhalevich;
4. Is concerned about the criminal proceedings being conducted by the Belarusian authorities against leaders of the democratic opposition as well as great number of civil society activists, journalists, teachers and students; is particularly concerned by the repeated detention of Natalia Radin editor of the "Charter '97" website;
5. Demands the immediate and unconditional release of Natalia Radin and other activists and independent journalists;
6. Condemns the Belarusian authorities for failing to provide unhindered access to legal assistance for the detainees;
7. Deplores the decision to prevent the legal practice of Pavel Sapelko, lawyer to many opposition politicians and activists; considers that continuous intimidation of independent judiciary goes against the international standards and commitments to which Belarus is a party;
8. Condemns the absence of any independent investigation into the use of brutal force by the police and KGB services against protesters on Election Day;
9. Deplores the decision of the Belarusian authorities to terminate the mandate of the OSCE Office in Minsk;
10. Calls on the Council, the Commission and the EU High Representative to step up its pressure on the Belarusian authorities, further expanding the visa ban and asset freeze list to those involved in the latest violations and human rights abuses relating to the cases of Ales Mikhalevich and Natalia Radin;
11. Welcomes the results of the donors' conference in Warsaw "Solidarity with Belarus"; expects that committed resources will be disbursed effectively for the support of independent media and civil society organisations;
12. Calls on the Commission to halt the ongoing cooperation and to withdraw the assistance it provided to the state-owned media in Belarus;
13. Welcomes the initial steps taken by the Commission to establish a special support mechanism for an effective and direct financial and technical assistance for the civil society, independent media and democratic political organisations in Belarus;

14. Calls for the establishment of a pan-European Belarus Forum that would serve as a structure to promote democratic reform in Belarus and would include democratic opposition, NGO's, independent media and their interlocutors in the EU;
15. Welcomes the Council's decision to re-apply the visa ban on leading authorities in Belarus, expanding it to the list of the individuals themselves directly involved in the 19 December 2010 repression and to their immediate families; considers that the visa ban list should remain open for further expansion to those involved in the torture of detainees and the harassment of independent journalists, lawyers and civil society activists;
16. Calls on the Council, the Commission and the EU High Representative to suspend Belarus' participation in the Eastern Partnership and other EU programmes and to freeze the Joint Interim Plan;
17. Considers that Council should revisit its position on the introduction of smart and targeted economic sanctions on Belarusian government-owned companies;
18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments of the Member States, the President, Government and Parliament of Belarus and the Parliamentary Assemblies of the Council of Europe and the OSCE.