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*Plenary sitting*

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**B9-0482/2021**

4.10.2021

## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Belarus after one year of protests and their violent repression (2021/2881(RSP))

**Sandra Kalniete, Michael Gahler, Paulo Rangel, David McAllister, Jerzy Buzek, Andrius Kubilius, Radosław Sikorski, Traian Băsescu, Vladimír Bilčík, Tomasz Frankowski, Andrzej Halicki, Rasa Juknevičienė, David Lega, Miriam Lexmann, Antonio López Istúriz, Luděk Niedermayer, Janina Ochojska, Michaela Šojdrová, Eugen Tomac, Isabel Wiseler Lima, Aušra Maldeikienė, Andrey Kovatchev**  
on behalf of the PPE Group

**B9-0482/2021**

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Belarus after one year of protests and their violent repression (2021/0000(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Belarus,
  - having regard to the European Council conclusions on Belarus of 24 May 2021,
  - having regard to the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on Belarus of 21 June 2021,
  - having regard to the 2021 State of the Union address by President von der Leyen,
  - having regard to the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, of 15 July 2021 on the crackdown against civil society in Belarus, and to his declarations on behalf of the EU of 30 July 2021 on the instrumentalisation of migrants and refugees by the regime and of 8 August 2021 on the first anniversary of the 9 August 2020 fraudulent presidential elections in Belarus,
  - having regard to the report of 5 July 2021 of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus, Anaïs Marin, to the United Nations Human Rights Council,
  - having regard to the awarding of the European Parliament’s 2020 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to the democratic opposition in Belarus,
  - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas more than one year after the so-called elections of 9 August 2020, the Belarusian authorities are continuing their repression and harassment of the Belarusian people and all organisations supporting freedom and democracy in Belarus, such as the Human Rights Centre ‘Viasna’ and the Belarusian Association of Journalists;
- B. whereas more than 35 000 Belarusian are estimated to have been detained at some point for protesting against the regime; whereas human rights defenders have documented hundreds of cases of torture and ill-treatment, while several people are still missing or were found dead, such as Raman Bandarenka; whereas there are 685 political prisoners in Belarus and over 4 600 criminal cases open against protesters; whereas thousands of Belarusians affected by political repression have fled to neighbouring countries to avoid further persecution;
- C. whereas on 6 September 2021, Belarusian opposition leaders and political prisoners Maria Kalesnikava, laureate of the European Parliament’s Sakharov Prize and the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize, and lawyer Maksim Znak were sentenced to 11 years and 10 years respectively for allegedly plotting a coup;
- D. whereas on 23 May 2021, Ryanair flight FR4978, an international passenger flight

between two EU capitals (Athens to Vilnius), was forcefully diverted to Minsk on the orders of Aliaksandr Lukashenka on the false pretence of a bomb threat, in breach of international conventions and jeopardising the safety of the more than 170 passengers and crew on board; whereas in Minsk, the Belarusian authorities detained Raman Pratasevich, a Belarusian journalist and activist, and his companion Sofia Sapega, a Russian citizen and student at the European Humanities University in Vilnius;

- E. whereas in retaliation against EU sanctions imposed in response to the forced diversion of Ryanair flight FR4978, the Lukashenka regime devised a scheme ferrying migrants from Iraq and Turkey to Minsk and, with the help of Belarusian border guards, facilitating their illegal crossing into the European Union;
  - F. whereas in her State of the Union address of 15 September 2021, the Commission President called the instrumentalisation of migrants a hybrid attack by Belarus aimed at destabilising Europe;
  - G. whereas between 10 and 16 September 2021, Russia and Belarus held the Zapad 2021 joint military exercise, involving 200 000 personnel and over 80 aircraft and helicopters;
  - H. whereas Russia and Belarus established a joint air force and air defence training centre in Grodno, 15 km from the border with Poland;
  - I. whereas the leaders of Belarus and Russia agreed on 28 roadmaps for further state integration, inter alia in the economic, fiscal and defence domains;
  - J. whereas on 28 June 2021, Belarus suspended its participation in the Eastern Partnership;
  - K. whereas the International Monetary Fund (IMF) decided to give Belarus access to nearly USD 1 billion in new Special Drawing Rights, as part of a broader USD 650 billion allocation to all IMF members;
1. Condemns the continuing repression, torture and ill-treatment against the peaceful people of Belarus, the suppression of the media and the internet, and the beating, arrest and intimidation of journalists, bloggers and other independent voices in Belarus; continues to call for the immediate and unconditional release and dropping of all charges against all persons detained for political reasons and demands an immediate end to the violence and repression by the state authorities of Belarus;
  2. Continues to support the Belarusian people in their legitimate demands and aspirations for free and fair elections, fundamental freedoms and human rights, democratic representation and political participation in a free and sovereign Belarus;
  3. Reiterates its non-recognition of the election of Aliaksandr Lukashenka to the post of President of Belarus; considers the current regime in Belarus as illegitimate, illegal and criminal;
  4. Reiterates its call for a genuine, inclusive dialogue between the regime and the democratic forces of Belarus, leading to new elections under international observation, as the only way out of the current political crisis;

5. Recalls its previous initiative for a high-level mission, involving former high-ranking European officials, to explore every possible avenue to stop the violence and free political prisoners and which could help create a conducive environment for an inclusive domestic political dialogue in Belarus; calls for the EU to speed up the preparations for a high-level 'Future of Democratic Belarus' international conference on the resolution of the crisis in Belarus;
6. Reaffirms that the hijacking and forced landing of Ryanair flight FR4978 in Minsk and subsequent detention by the Belarusian authorities of journalist Raman Pratasevich and Sofia Sapega is a violation of international law which constitutes an act of state terrorism, and therefore calls for the EU to impose on those responsible for the acts in Belarus and Russia a form of restrictive measures directed against certain persons and entities, with a view to combating terrorism by including them on a list of persons, groups and entities to which Council Regulation (EC) No 2580/2001<sup>1</sup> applies;
7. Condemns the harsh and unjust court sentences recently given out to opposition leaders Maria Kalesnikava and Maksim Znak as well as other political prisoners and detainees; deplores the fact that the court hearings were organised behind closed doors and that EU and Member State diplomats were prevented from participating;
8. Condemns the acts of repression and hostile actions carried out by the authorities against representatives of the Polish minority and against the Polish school system in Belarus; calls, in this respect, for the immediate and unconditional release of Andželika Borys, journalist Andrzej Poczobut and other political prisoners;
9. Invites the European Parliament's platform on the fight against impunity in Belarus to outline at its forthcoming meeting the way forward for the EU to contribute to a litigation strategy and participate alongside partners in the international trial process, including universal jurisdiction, for convicting Aliaksandr Lukashenka and members of his regime personally for the crimes committed against the people of Belarus on a massive scale; calls, in particular, for the platform to consider bringing the case of Belarus to the International Court of Justice on the basis of the violations of the Chicago Convention, the Montreal Convention and the UN Convention against Torture committed by Lukashenka's regime; reiterates that, to this end, the EU should establish a task force of legal advisers (European accountability team) to assist with national and international investigations and trials, working in particular in the area of universal jurisdiction cases at EU and Member State level, and to report periodically to Parliament on the progress made; underlines that a comprehensive investigation into the crimes committed by the Lukashenka regime against the people of Belarus should be concluded with the setting-up of an international tribunal to prosecute those crimes;
10. Condemns the Lukashenka regime's instrumentalisation of migrants to advance political goals in breach of international norms and Belarus's bilateral treaties with its EU neighbours; underlines that Belarus's state-sponsoring of illegal crossings at the EU's external border, coupled with a disinformation campaign, constitutes hybrid warfare aimed at intimidating and destabilising the EU; reiterates the need for the countries most affected to effectively protect the EU's external borders with a view to protecting the

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<sup>1</sup> Council Regulation (EC) No 2580/2001 of 27 December 2001 on specific restrictive measures directed against certain persons and entities with a view to combating terrorism, OJ L 344, 28.12.2001, p. 70.

Union as a whole;

11. Invites the Member States most affected to make full use of the tools provided by the EU, such as the deployment of Frontex to assist and support national capabilities in order to more effectively deal with the migratory crisis artificially created by the Lukashenka regime;
12. Underlines the importance of the EU effectively reaching out to countries of origin to encourage them stop their cooperation with the regime in Minsk and suspend flights to Belarus; highlights that Belarus has recently suspended its visa regime with Pakistan, Jordan, Egypt and South Africa, enabling visa-free travel from these countries to Belarus;
13. Calls on the Commission to prepare relevant legislative proposals providing Member States with the necessary safeguards to effectively react and respond to the instrumentalisation of migration for political purposes by third countries, by ensuring, inter alia, proper border facilities and support for the protection of the EU's external borders by preventing irregular crossings, as well as envisaging ways to stop the abuse of the asylum system by any hostile third country or criminal network;
14. Underlines the importance of the swift adoption of the fifth package of sanctions, which would gradually increase the scope of sectoral economic sanctions on key industries in Belarus involved in the financing of the Lukashenka regime, eliminate all identified loopholes in previous sanctions packages and include sanctions related to the smuggling into the EU of illegal migrants;
15. Reiterates the urgency of exposing Russia's involvement in the hybrid actions of Lukashenka's regime against the EU, including the use of migrants for political purposes, and of holding the Kremlin accountable for such actions; demands that the Commission report periodically to Parliament on the progress made;
16. Stresses that any agreements reached between Lukashenka and Russia on state integration, being a *de facto* trade of sovereignty for regime survival, will be considered illegitimate and illegal and will not be recognised by the international community;
17. Calls on the Member States to coordinate with international partners in multilateral organisations such as the IMF to restrict the disbursement of funds to the Lukashenka regime and freeze all cooperation with it; takes note of the continuous investments by non-democratic countries, notably Russia and China, in Belarus;
18. Praises the systematic and consistent work of Belarusian democratic forces in Belarus and in exile, in particular Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, the Coordination Council and National Anti-Crisis Management; reiterates the urgent need to maintain and expand contacts and cooperation with these forces; welcomes, in this context, the decision of Lithuania to grant official accreditation to the Belarusian democratic representation in Vilnius and invites the remaining Member States to follow suit; calls for the EU to establish a democratic Belarus representation office in Brussels;
19. Calls for the EU to engage on an operational level with the representatives of the democratic forces of Belarus in order to conclude work on the adoption of a roadmap

aimed at the implementation of a EUR 3 billion comprehensive plan of economic support to a future democratic Belarus in areas such as advocacy capacity building, reform capacity building, investment management capacity building and state governance capacity building for the democratic forces of Belarus; invites the EU to start the necessary preparations for the dialogue with the democratic forces of Belarus and to report periodically to Parliament on the progress made, including on the adoption of an EU strategy on its future relations with a democratic Belarus and on a comprehensive set of actions to prepare the democratic forces of Belarus for the implementation of this plan;

20. Calls, in the context of the Eastern Partnership initiative, for the EU to involve democratic Belarus in the EU association process and to engage with its representatives in order to sign a joint memorandum of intent for the adoption of joint European integration reform programmes;
21. Reiterates its call for the representatives of democratic Belarus to be officially invited to the upcoming Eastern Partnership Summit and for them to be included in high-level bilateral and preparatory meetings at EU and national level, as well as in parliamentary sessions and interparliamentary meetings with the European and national parliaments; reiterates the importance of establishing official groups dedicated to Belarus in all national parliaments of the EU Member States, Eastern Neighbourhood and G7 countries;
22. Condemns the Kremlin's creeping interference in Belarus, in particular in the areas of state propaganda, disinformation and military cooperation; notes with concern the increasing efforts of President Putin to support the Lukashenka regime in brutal repression against the people of Belarus and in holding power in the country; reiterates the need for a proper EU response, as in this way the Kremlin is posing a direct threat to the sovereignty and democratic efforts of Belarus; reiterates that the EU has to make it clear that if Russia continues its current policy on Belarus, the EU will have to impose additional containment and deterrence measures on Russia; asks that the EU report periodically to Parliament on the Kremlin's interference in Belarus, including its exploitation of the situation with a view to deeper political, military and economic control of Belarus;
23. Reiterates that the EU should pay special attention to financial flows from Belarus; asks that the EU report to Parliament on the assets of Lukashenka's entourage and those linked to Lukashenka's corrupt oligarchs; reiterates its call for the EU to coordinate these actions with the United States, the G7 partners and other like-minded countries;
24. Notes with concern the aggressive Zapad 2021 military exercise, the largest of its kind, aimed at neighbouring EU Member States; reiterates that this exercise, as well as other, similar large-scale exercises, underline Russia's offensive posturing and determination to use its capabilities in a hostile fashion;
25. Urges the Commission, the European External Action Service and the EU Member States to increase the direct support to the Belarusian opposition, civil society and independent media within and outside Belarus;
26. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the

Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and the authorities of the Republic of Belarus.