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*Plenary sitting*

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**B9-0270/2022**

13.5.2022

## 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 prosecution of opposition and detention of trade union leaders in Belarus (2022/2664(RSP))

**Sandra Kalniete, Michael Gahler, Rasa Juknevičienė, David McAllister, Vangelis Meimarakis, Siegfried Mureşan, Paulo Rangel, Andrius Kubilius, Jerzy Buzek, Traian Băsescu, Vladimír Bilčík, Vasile Blaga, Daniel Buda, Deirdre Clune, Tomasz Frankowski, Andrzej Halicki, Arba Kokalari, Ewa Kopacz, David Lega, Miriam Lexmann, Antonio López-Istúriz White, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska, Aušra Maldeikienė, Lukas Mandl, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Liudas Mažylis, Luděk Niedermayer, Gheorghe-Vlad Nistor, Janina Ochojska, Stanislav Polčák, Christian Sagartz, Radosław Sikorski, Michaela Šojdrová, Eugen Tomac, Inese Vaidere, Isabel Wiseler-Lima, Milan Zver**  
on behalf of the PPE Group

**European Parliament resolution on the prosecution of opposition and detention of trade union leaders in Belarus  
(2022/2664(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Belarus,
  - having regard to the European Council conclusions of 21-22 October 2021,
  - having regard to the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 28 February 2022 on the constitutional referendum in Belarus,
  - having regard to the statement by the Spokesperson of the European External Action Service (EEAS) of 29 April 2022 on new repressive measures in Belarus widening the scope for the use of capital punishment,
  - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas since October 2020, the EU has imposed five packages of sanctions in connection with the situation in Belarus, targeting a total of 183 individuals and 26 entities, which have been issued in response to, among other things, unacceptable violence by the Belarusian authorities against peaceful protestors, the weaponisation of migrants for political purposes and hybrid attacks at the EU's border;
- B. whereas on 14 December 2021, leading Belarusian opposition figures Siarhei Tsikhanouski, Mikalai Statkevich, Ihar Losik, Artsyom Sakau, Uladzimir Tsyhanovich and Dzmitry Papou were sentenced to long prison terms on trumped-up charges of trying to seize power, inciting hatred and social unrest, and extremism; whereas Syarhei Tsikhanouski was sentenced to 18 years in prison, Mikalai Statkevich was sentenced to 14 years in prison, and Ihar Losik, Artsyom Sakau, Uladzimir Tsyhanovich and Dzmitry Papou were handed 15, 16, 15 and 16-year sentences respectively on similar fabricated charges;
- C. whereas the military aggression against Ukraine was launched in part from the territory of Belarus, which assisted and enabled the Russian aggression;
- D. whereas on 27 February 2022, a fabricated referendum on amending the constitution took place in Belarus, leading to the impairment of Belarus's neutrality and the renouncement of its non-nuclear status; whereas nuclear weapons could be stationed in Belarus for the first time since the fall of the Soviet Union and could represent a threat to European security;
- E. whereas the EU has also adopted sanctions against Belarus in response to its involvement in the Russian aggression and invasion: individual and economic sanctions targeting 22 people, restrictions on trade, a ban from SWIFT for three Belarusian banks, a prohibition

on transactions with the Central Bank of Belarus, limits on the financial inflows from Belarus to the EU and a prohibition on the provision of euro-denominated banknotes to Belarus;

- F. whereas on 28 April 2022, the Belarusian National Assembly approved an amendment to the Criminal Code introducing the death penalty for ‘attempted acts of terrorism’; whereas Belarus is the only country in Europe to still carry out capital punishment;
  - G. whereas on 6 May 2022, a Belarusian court sentenced Sofia Sapega, the girlfriend of Roman Protasievich who was detained after their commercial flight was forced to land in Belarus last year, to six years in prison for inciting social hatred;
  - H. whereas in the past two months, attacks on trade union activists and leaders have intensified, primarily in relation to many of them having stood up against Belarus’s support for the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, as well as their long-standing support for democracy and opposition to the Lukashenka regime;
  - I. whereas state security officials searched the offices of independent trade union organisations (the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions, the Belarusian Freed Trade Union, the Free Trade Union of Metalworkers and the Belarusian Radio and Electronic Industry Workers’ Union) and the homes of their leaders in different towns around the country; whereas more than 16 trade union leaders and activists have been detained, many of whom are associated with the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions;
  - J. whereas the trade union leaders and activists arrested are: Aliaksandr Yarashuk, Siarhei Antusevich, Aliaksandr Bukhvostau, Mikalaj Sharakh, Yana Malash, Vitali Chychmarou, Hanna Dus, Vadzim Payvin, Mikhail Hromau, Yury Beliakou, Vasil Berasneu, Hennadz Fiadynich, Dzmitry Barodka, Miraslau Sabchuk, Iryna Bud-Husaim and Aleh Padalinski;
  - K. whereas on 11 April 2022, the independent Belarusian Radio and Electronic Industry Workers’ Union was arbitrarily declared an ‘extremist group’ and subsequently banned;
  - L. whereas the regime in Minsk continues its brutal repression of its own people; whereas human rights defenders, journalists, political activists and anyone who can be accused of being a dissenting voice face trumped-up/arbitrary charges, prosecution and very long jail sentences; whereas there are more than one thousand political prisoners in Belarus at the moment;
- 1. Expresses strong support and solidarity with the thousands of Belarusian citizens who are risking their freedom and, more and more frequently, their lives in continuing to oppose the illegitimate regime of Aliaksandr Lukashenka following the fraudulent elections of 9 August 2020;
  - 2. Strongly condemns and demands an immediate end to the violence and repression by state authorities in Belarus, and in particular to the unlawful detention, torture, ill-treatment in detention and criminal prosecution of peaceful citizens;
  - 3. Recalls that many of the Belarusian citizens arrested by the regime are tried in secret, unfair and biased trials, often on fabricated charges and with no legal safeguards;

4. Demands the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners in Belarus; demands the immediate release of all Belarusian citizens who have been detained and charged for their civic activities and opposition to the repression of the regime, as well as its support for the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine;
5. Demands the immediate and unconditional release of all independent trade union leaders and activists; demands an end to the intimidation of independent trade union leaders and activists and to the disruption of the functioning of trade unions in Belarus;
6. Condemns the regime's systematic repression against civilians, which since the stolen elections of 9 August 2020 has forced thousands of Belarusians to flee the country; reiterates that the ongoing campaign of repression and the forced displacement of civilians amounts to grave violations of human rights;
7. Deplores the fact that Belarus is currently the only country in Europe to still enforce the death penalty and has widened the scope for its use; condemns the amendment to the Belarusian Criminal Code introducing the death penalty for 'attempted acts of terrorism'; considers that it can be easily abused by the regime to liquidate its political opponents; recalls that many political prisoners have been charged or have already been sentenced to long prison terms under the code's terrorism provisions;
8. Firmly condemns the Russian military's use of Belarusian territory for the movement of troops and weapons, the use of airspace, refuelling, and replenishing and storing military equipment; condemns the support of Belarus and the Belarusian armed forces and secret services for the launch of the military aggression against Ukraine; considers Belarus to be co-responsible for the attack, bearing all the legal consequences deriving from international law; expresses deep concern about the risks posed by Belarus abandoning its neutrality, hosting Russian armed forces and conducting joint military exercises;
9. Calls for all sanctions issued against Russia to be strictly mirrored for Belarus and implemented appropriately, including in all future rounds of sanctions;
10. Expresses appreciation and support for the Belarusian citizens who took to the streets, risking their own safety, to condemn the war launched in the name of the Russian Federation and with the support of the illegitimate dictator of Belarus, and for those who conducted sabotage operations to prevent and disrupt Russian military logistics on the territory of Belarus;
11. Condemns disinformation campaigns and the dissemination of the Kremlin's war propaganda in Belarus;
12. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to provide support and protection to human rights defenders and civil society in Belarus, who will be facing a severe crackdown, including by issuing emergency visas to leave Belarus if needed;
13. Welcomes the ban on Belarusian athletes from international sports competitions such as the Wimbledon tennis tournament;
14. Strongly condemns the Lukashenka regime's continued weaponisation of human beings for political purposes, 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 hostile disinformation campaign, constitutes a form of hybrid warfare aimed at intimidating and destabilising the EU; expresses strong solidarity with Lithuania, Poland, Latvia and other Member States targeted by the Belarusian regime; reiterates the need for the countries most affected to effectively protect the EU's external borders, in compliance with the relevant international law;

15. Calls on the Member States to improve their cooperation on border management, the fight against human trafficking, cigarette smuggling and other security challenges created or aggravated by the Belarusian regime;
16. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to ensure that the necessary measures are in place to strengthen resilience to all forms of foreign interference that could be perpetrated by Lukashenko's regime, including, but not limited to, cyberattacks and disinformation in the context of Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine;
17. Praises the systematic and consistent work of Belarusian democratic forces in Belarus and in exile, in particular the leader of the democratic opposition, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, the Coordination Council and National Anti-Crisis Management; reiterates the urgent need to maintain and expand contacts and cooperation with these forces;
18. Calls for the adoption of an EU strategy on the future relations with a democratic Belarus and on a comprehensive set of actions to prepare the democratic forces of Belarus for the implementation of a comprehensive plan to stimulate reforms and provide economic support;
19. Urges the Commission, the EEAS and the EU Member States to increase the direct support to the Belarusian opposition, civil society, human rights defenders and independent media organisations within and outside Belarus; underlines the importance of maintaining relations with such individuals; commits to stepping up its own democracy support activities; reiterates its call for a targeted EU assistance programme to help civil society, independent media, academia and the Belarusian opposition in exile, as well as victims of political repression and police violence and those fleeing the oppressive regime;
20. 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 the EUR 3 billion economic and investment package already envisaged by the Commission as a way of embracing the democratic aspirations of the Belarusian people; calls for political dialogue between the EU and the democratic forces of Belarus in order to seek a joint vision on said support plan; highlights the need for a substantive public discussion in order to build public support for considerable EU involvement;
21. Supports the preparations for an EU-led international donor conference to assist the democratic forces of Belarus;
22. Calls for the EU institutions to take all necessary action in international institutions and proceedings and at the International Criminal Court (ICC) or other appropriate

international tribunals or courts to prosecute the actions of Aliaksandr Lukashenka in relation to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine as war crimes and crimes against humanity, and actively participate in their investigation;

23. Underlines the need for a comprehensive investigation into the crimes committed by the Lukashenka regime against the people of Belarus; calls on the Member States to actively apply the universal jurisdiction principle and prepare court cases against Belarusian officials responsible for or complicit in violence and repression, including Aliaksandr Lukashenka;
24. Supports the creation of a task force of international law experts, which will assist in the deliberations within the European Parliament's platform and give technical advice on how to move forward in cases of universal jurisdiction in the ICC, the International Court of Justice and ad hoc tribunals, with a view to fighting impunity in Belarus;
25. Considers that the EU should be ready to assist the democratic forces of Belarus in the efficient implementation of their representation roles in the areas of dialogue facilitation, advocacy, reform capacity building, investment management and state governance;
26. Supports the representatives of the democratic forces of Belarus in initiating the national truth and reconciliation initiative and calls for the EU to assist in this initiative through a robust communication strategy;
27. Calls for the EU institutions and Member States to organise annual summits with high-ranking representatives of the democratic forces of Belarus; considers that this would be conducive to adopting joint policy guidelines on the future of EU relations with a democratic Belarus;
28. 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, the authorities of the Republic of Belarus, and the representatives of the Belarusian democratic opposition.