

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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WRITTEN DECLARATION

pursuant to Rule 116 of the Rules of Procedure

by Eugenijus Gentvilas, Arūnas Degutis, Gintaras Didžiokas and Eugenijus Maldeikis

on the possible dangers of EU economic sanctions against Belarus

Lapse date: 15.4.2007

0005/2007

Written declaration on the possible dangers of EU economic sanctions against Belarus

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Rule 116 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. welcoming the plan for a new strategy on cooperation with Belarus signed by the Commissioner with responsibility for external relations and the European neighbourhood policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, on 21 November 2006 (IP/06/1593),
- B. whereas Council Decision 2006/440/EC, which increases the cost of an entry visa for citizens of neighbouring countries from EUR 35 to EUR 60, makes cooperation involving countries and citizens more difficult,
- C. whereas Council Regulation (EC) No 1933/2006 of 21 December 2006 temporarily withdrawing access to the generalised tariff preferences from the Republic of Belarus is detrimental above all to the Belarusian people and not to the regime's leaders,
 1. Expresses its concern at the inconsistency of the action taken by the different EU institutions, given that, in some instances, EU economic cooperation with Belarus is being encouraged, while, in others, economic sanctions are being imposed;
 2. Considers that the EU's objective should be to strengthen civil society in Belarus and to encourage contacts between victims of the regime, young people and students, and EU citizens, rather than to impose economic sanctions on the people of a neighbouring country;
 3. Calls on the EU institutions to be aware that imposing economic sanctions on Belarus would have an adverse economic effect also on certain EU Member States, principally central and eastern European countries;
 4. Considers that the EU should ensure that aid to Belarus is expanded, while making sure that this aid is not used to strengthen the regime;
 5. Believes that the Belarusian regime would present EU sanctions to its citizens as an attempt to isolate Belarus and to make life worse for ordinary Belarusians, in order to reinforce the regime's position among Belarusian citizens as a 'legitimate fighter against the evil European Union';
 6. Instructs its President to forward this declaration, together with the names of the signatories, to the Council, the Commission and the Member States.