The EU condemns in the strongest possible terms the internal repression by the Belarusian regime following the falsified presidential elections of August 2020. The number of recognised political prisoners in Belarus has now reached more than 1200, and continues to grow. The EU constantly and firmly demands the release of all who have been unlawfully detained, the prosecution of those responsible for Belarusian state brutality, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Since the fraudulent elections of 2020, the EU has progressively imposed sanctions and restrictive measures against individuals (195) and entities (35). These measures include the President of Belarus and other key figures of the political leadership and of the government, high-level members of the security system, who are responsible for the repression of civil society, and/or liable for the instrumentalisation of migrants for political purposes, and/or benefit from and support the Belarusian regime.

In parallel, the EU has recalibrated its assistance fully away from the authorities and increased its support for the people and civil society, in line with the 12 October 2020 Council Conclusions on Belarus and in light of Belarus involvement in the Russian military aggression, recognised by the 24 February 2022 European Council Conclusions. Since August 2020, the EU has provided over EUR 65 million to support victims of repression, civil society, independent media, youth, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, health capacities, culture. This includes legal assistance, medical support, psychological help and other emergency assistance to those most in need, including families of political prisoners. The EU provided humanitarian support to vulnerable people stranded at the Belarusian border.

The EU continues to stand with the people of Belarus in their drive for freedom and democracy. The immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners and the halt to all human rights abuses are preconditions of any kind of mitigation of sanctions on the regime, concurrently the EU is also ready to adopt further restrictive measures, should the situation in the country require this.

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1 Since October 2020, the EU has imposed six rounds of sanctions against Belarus, which were adopted in response to the fraudulent August 2020 presidential elections, the ensuing violence and repression on civil society and the democratic opposition, the instrumentalisation of migrants for political purposes, hybrid attacks at the EU borders and Belarus’ involvement of Russian military aggression against Ukraine. Reference to the list of restrictive measures is at EU sanctions map on Belarus: https://sanctionsmap.eu/#/main/details/2?checked=2&search=%7B%22value%22,%22%22%22%22%22%22searchType%22%7B%7B%7D%7D