



Plenary sitting

**B9-0164/2023 }
B9-0165/2023 }
B9-0166/2023 }
B9-0167/2023 }
B9-0168/2023 } RC1**

13.3.2023

JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 132(2) and (4) of the Rules of Procedure

replacing the following motions:

B9-0164/2023 (PPE)
B9-0165/2023 (Renew)
B9-0166/2023 (Verts/ALE)
B9-0167/2023 (S&D)
B9-0168/2023 (ECR)

on further repression against the people of Belarus, in particular the cases of
Andrzej Poczobut and Ales Bialiatski
(2023/2573(RSP))

**Sandra Kalniete, Michael Gahler, Rasa Juknevičienė, Željana Zovko,
David McAllister, Andrius Kubilius, Isabel Wiseler-Lima, Vladimír Bilčík,
Tomasz Frankowski, Andrzej Halicki, Arba Kokalari, Andrey Kovatchev,
David Lega, Miriam Lexmann, Antonio López-Istúriz White, Elżbieta
Katarzyna Łukacijewska, Liudas Mažylis, Janina Ochojska, Radosław
Sikorski, Milan Zver**
on behalf of the PPE Group

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Pedro Marques, Tonino Picula, Thijs Reuten, Juozas Olekas

on behalf of the S&D Group

Petras Auštrevičius, Nicola Beer, Bernard Guetta, Karen Melchior, Karin Karlsbro, Ramona Strugariu, Hilde Vautmans

on behalf of the Renew Group

Viola von Cramon-Taubadel, Hannah Neumann

on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

Anna Fotyga, Beata Mazurek, Angel Dzhambazki, Elżbieta Kruk, Tomasz Piotr Poręba, Dominik Tarczyński, Witold Jan Waszczykowski, Jadwiga Wiśniewska, Andżelika Anna Możdżanowska, Alexandr Vondra,

Veronika Vrecionová, Assita Kanko, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, Beata Kempa, Joachim Stanisław Brudziński, Zbigniew Kuźmiuk, Charlie Weimers,

Adam Bielan, Roberts Zile, Zdzisław Krasnodębski, Eugen Jurzyca,

Bogdan Rzońca, Elżbieta Rafalska, Ryszard Czarnecki, Waldemar Tomaszewski

on behalf of the ECR Group

on behalf of the ECR Group

Fabio Massimo Castaldo, Nikolaj Villumsen, Silvia Modig

European Parliament resolution on further repression against the people of Belarus, in particular the cases of Andrzej Poczobut and Ales Bialiatski (2023/2573(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Belarus,
- having regard to the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and to all other human rights conventions to which Belarus is a party,
- having regard to the European Council conclusions of 21-22 October 2021,
- having regard to the statements by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell of 25 March 2021 on the targeting of the Union of Poles in Belarus, of 17 January 2023 on the trials against opposition leaders and journalists and of 3 March 2023 on the sentencing of Ales Bialiatski and other Human Rights Defenders, as well as to the statement by the Spokesperson of the European External Action Service of 7 October 2022 on the court ruling against independent media representatives,
- having regard to the report of 4 March 2022 of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Belarus in the run-up to the 2020 presidential election and in its aftermath and to the statement of 6 January 2023 by the Spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on trials in Belarus,
- having regard to the reports of 4 May 2022 and 20 July 2022 of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus, Anaïs Marin, to the UN Human Rights Council, the call by UN experts for the immediate release of jailed Nobel winner and other rights defenders in Belarus of 10 October 2022 and the comment by UN Human Rights spokesperson Ravina Shamdasani on sentencing of human rights defenders in Belarus of 3 March 2023,
- having regard to the G7 Foreign Ministers' statement of 4 November 2022 on Belarus,
- having regard to the statement by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights of 3 March 2023 on the conviction of Nobel laureate Bialiatski and other human rights defenders,
- having regard to the statements by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Representative on Freedom of the Media, Teresa Ribeiro, of 13 July 2022 on the persistent imprisonment of journalists and media workers in Belarus, of 15 September 2022 on the continued jailing of journalists in Belarus and of 7 October 2022 on the continued persecution of Belarusian media professionals,

- having regard to Rule 132(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas ever since peaceful protests broke out after the massively falsified presidential election of 9 August 2020, the Lukashenka regime has been continuing its acts of repression against the people of Belarus, with civil society representatives, human rights defenders, journalists, opposition activists and many others being harassed, persecuted, arrested, tortured and convicted for expressing opposition to the regime, to the systematic human rights violations or to the regime’s support for Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine; whereas criminal prosecution remains one of the most severe forms of repression, and remains widespread;
- B. whereas as of March 2023 there were more than 1 450 people on the list the Viasna Human Rights Centre keeps of Belarusian political prisoners, including the Sakharov Prize and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Ales Bialiatski; whereas Viasna is aware of at least 2 900 people who have been convicted in politically motivated criminal cases; whereas, in 2022, Lukashenka’s regime made at least 1 200 political convictions on criminal charges and 215 print media outlets were shut down, while more than 1 000 NGOs have been liquidated in Belarus since 2020;
- C. whereas Ales Bialiatski, a prominent human rights defender, founder and chairman of the Viasna Human Rights Centre and Nobel Peace Prize and Sakharov Prize laureate, was arrested on 12 February 2022 and was held in pre-trial detention; whereas he was imprisoned between 2011 and 2014 and jailed again in 2021 in the wake of the massive pro-democracy demonstrations that followed the 2020 presidential elections; whereas, on 3 March 2023 Ales Bialiatski, Valiantsin Stefanovich, a member of the Viasna Human Rights Centre, human rights defender Zmitser Salauyou, and Uladzimir Labkovich, coordinator of the ‘Human Rights Defenders for Free Elections’ campaign, were respectively sentenced to 10, 9, 8 and 7 years of imprisonment in politically motivated trials; whereas, on 3 November 2021, Leanid Sudalenka, a lawyer from the Homiel branch of Viasna, and Tatsiana Lasitsa, a Viasna volunteer, were respectively sentenced to three years and two and a half years in prison;
- D. whereas Andrzej Poczobut, a journalist and a member of the Union of Poles in Belarus, was arrested on 18 March 2021, and later sentenced to three years in prison on charges of ‘publicly insulting the President of Belarus’ and ‘inciting ethnic hatred’; whereas on 8 February 2023 the Hrodna Regional Court found him guilty of encouraging actions aimed at harming the national security of the Republic of Belarus and inciting ethnic hostility, and sentenced him to eight years in prison;
- E. whereas journalists remain among those most targeted by the regime; whereas there are currently more than 30 journalists in prison in Belarus; whereas by October 2022, at least 29 independent media outlets had been designated ‘extremist’ and blocked by the authorities; whereas, according to the Belarusian Association of Journalists, public discourse is almost completely suppressed and the media are severely repressed; whereas, as a result of the total crackdown on independent media, freedom of speech no longer exists in Belarus, with total surveillance of the internet by the regime;

F. whereas the charges against Andrzej Poczobut and Ales Bialiatski are widely

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considered to be politically motivated and aimed at silencing independent voices and suppressing freedom of expression and association;

- G. whereas Belarusian democratic political forces continue to be persecuted; whereas *in absentia* proceedings have been initiated by the Lukashenka regime against leaders of the democratic forces of Belarus and many leaders and representatives of the democratic opposition parties continue to be imprisoned in inhumane conditions; whereas on 6 March 2023 the Minsk City Court sentenced the leader of the Belarusian democratic opposition and the Head of the United Transitional Cabinet, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, to 15 years in prison *in absentia*; whereas the court also sentenced other members of the Coordination Council, namely Pavel Latushka, to 18 years in prison, and Maryia Maroz, Volha Kavalkova, and Siarhei Dyleuski each to 12 years in prison; whereas the sentences were pronounced days after a Belarusian court extended by 18 months the 18-year prison term of Tsikhanouskaya's husband, the dissident and pro-democracy activist Siarhei Tsikhanouski; whereas several of those convicted are laureates of the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought;
- H. whereas on 17 October 2022, in an unprecedentedly harsh sentence in a politically motivated case in Belarus, political prisoner Mikalai Autukhovich was sentenced to 25 years in a high-security penal colony, while 11 other people in this case were sentenced to prison terms of up to 20 years;
- I. whereas the authorities in Belarus have repeatedly violated the human rights of the country's citizens, including the right to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association; whereas repression continues to affect all sectors of society; whereas the persecution of individuals continues under the guise of combating extremism and terrorism; whereas amendments to the Belarusian Criminal Code entered into force in January 2022, reintroducing criminal liability for participation in the activities of unregistered organisations; whereas in May 2022 the authorities expanded the application of capital punishment to attempted acts of terrorism, a charge previously used in trials of political activists; whereas the Belarusian regime continues to severely restrict the freedom of association; whereas, in December 2022 the Belarusian Government submitted a bill to parliament to amend the Law on Political Parties, which may ultimately lead to the de facto banning of any political party in opposition to the regime;
- J. whereas, in October 2022, Lukashenka signed into law Belarus's withdrawal from the First Optional Protocol to the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, blocking the UN Human Rights Committee's mandate to receive and review human rights complaints from individuals in Belarus, one of the last avenues of redress for persecuted Belarusians;
- K. whereas administrative persecution is one of the instruments the Lukashenka regime uses to silence the opposition and any voices questioning the regime; whereas, in January 2023, the Viasna Human Rights Centre reported at least 350 arrests and 141 cases of politically motivated administrative persecution;

L. whereas the persecution of independent trade unions is still ongoing; whereas the

Belarusian authorities have amended legislation to broaden the scope for organisations to be categorised as ‘extremist’; whereas in July 2022, the Supreme Court of Belarus shut down four major independent trade unions and the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions; whereas in January 2023, independent trade union leaders Henadz Fiadynich and Vasil Berasneu were sentenced to nine years in prison, while Vatslau Areshka was sentenced to eight years; whereas in February 2023 the members of Rabochy Rukh (Workers’ Movement) group Siarhei Shelest, Uladzimir Zhurauka, Andrei Paheryla, Hanna Ablab, Aliaksandr Hashnikau, Siarhei Dziuba, Ihar Mints, Valiantsin Tseranevich, Siarhei Shametska and Aliaksandr Kapshul were accused of high treason and of creating and participating in an extremist organisation and were each sentenced to between 11 and 15 years in prison; whereas the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Belarus continues adding activists and leaders of the democratic trade union movement to lists of extremists and terrorists;

- M. whereas the regime has continued its acts of repression against lawyers in retaliation for expressing views on rights issues, representing clients in politically motivated cases, or for speaking out against the war in Ukraine; whereas since August 2020, at least 70 attorneys have lost their licences following arbitrary decisions by the Justice Ministry or politically motivated disbarment procedures; whereas in 2022, seven attorneys faced politically motivated criminal charges and continued to face administrative charges, detentions, searches and harassment; whereas Vital Brahinetz was sentenced to eight years of imprisonment for his defence of several political prisoners including Ales Bialiatski;
- N. whereas the Lukashenka regime has taken increasingly repressive measures against the national minorities in Belarus, in particular the Polish and Lithuanian minorities, including the closure of schools teaching in the national minority languages, as well as measures against the organisations representing these minorities, such as the Union of Poles in Belarus; whereas systematic discrimination against the Polish and other national minorities has been going on for many years, with the most prominent cases of repression being those against Andželika Borys and Andrzej Poczobut;
- O. whereas the Lukashenka regime is continuing its policy of Russification of Belarus, with the strategic aim of marginalising and destroying expressions of Belarusian national identity, including its language and culture; whereas this policy also involves banning national and historical symbols of Belarus such as the white-red-white flag and the Pahonia coat of arms, and the closure of publishing houses, private schools and Belarusian language courses;
- P. whereas the illegitimate Lukashenka regime continues to suppress the freedom of religion and belief; whereas according to the Coordination Council, several Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic and Orthodox priests and Protestant pastors have faced various forms of pressure, from fines to long terms of imprisonment, including Siarhei Rezanovich who was sentenced to 16 years’ imprisonment;
- Q. whereas political prisoners are subjected to additional repression and inhumane conditions; whereas this takes the form of holding political prisoners in conditions that

are prohibited under the international obligations of Belarus, subjecting them to disciplinary penalties for bogus reasons and placing them in punishment cells; whereas political prisoners continue to report deteriorating health, humiliation and ill treatment; whereas in some cases the security level of their detention is upgraded and the term of imprisonment is arbitrarily extended, the right to correspondence is violated and political prisoners are deprived of family visits, as demonstrated by the case of Palina Sharenda-Panasiuk;

- R. whereas thousands of Belarusians have been forced or otherwise compelled to leave their homeland and seek safety abroad; whereas the Belarusian authorities continue to adopt measures restricting the rights of Belarusians living abroad; whereas ‘The Way Home’ programme, initiated by the Lukashenka regime, consists of ‘inviting’ Belarusians who had left the country in recent years to return to Belarus with the promise that they will not be persecuted provided that they make an official confession; whereas many Belarusians who have come back to their country have been arrested, persecuted and sometimes sentenced to imprisonment because they took part in protests, published comments on social media criticising the Lukashenka regime or donated to victims of the repression in Belarus; whereas, in January 2023, the Belarusian regime enacted a law that will strip citizenship from people in exile that it accuses of so-called extremism-related crimes, a list that now includes more than 2 000 individuals;
- S. whereas, more than two years on, there is no indication that the Belarusian authorities are investigating the thousands of reports of police brutality filed since the protests in August 2020 or the killings of protesters; whereas the widespread impunity for human rights violations perpetuates the desperate situation of the Belarusian people; whereas the absence of the rule of law impedes their right to a fair trial; whereas Belarus is the only country in Europe to still carry out capital punishment;
- T. whereas the Belarusian authorities often resort to surveillance, online censorship and disinformation, deploying technology to control the population; whereas these repressive practices represent another step towards digital authoritarianism and the suppression of people’s digital rights in Belarus, resulting in the escalating intimidation of citizens and the shrinking of the civic space; whereas the Lukashenka regime also employs transnational repression against Belarusian citizens living abroad;
- U. whereas the EU has imposed sanctions on individuals and entities responsible for the repression in Belarus, and has provided support to civil society and the independent media in the country;
- V. whereas the Belarusian authorities continue to support Russia’s unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine by allowing Russia to use Belarusian territory for military attacks against Ukraine; whereas scores of Belarusian citizens have been prosecuted for expressing support for Ukraine, criticising the government for supporting Russia’s war of aggression or reporting on the movements of Russian troops and military equipment within Belarus;
- W. whereas on 7 September 2022, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe invited the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to set up a Contact Group on

Belarus in cooperation with representatives of Belarusian democratic forces and civil society; whereas on 1 March 2023, the official Mission of Democratic Belarus was opened in Brussels in a ceremony attended by Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya;

1. Reiterates its solidarity with the people of Belarus who continue to stand up for a sovereign, free and democratic Belarus, risking their freedom and their lives; continues to demand an immediate end to the repression by state authorities against the people of Belarus, the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners and all persons arbitrarily detained, arrested or sentenced on politically motivated grounds, and for all charges against them to be dropped, as well as for their full rehabilitation and financial compensation for damages incurred due to their illegitimate detention;
2. Continues to condemn in the strongest terms the ongoing repression in Belarus, including that through politically motivated show trials; condemns the Lukashenka regime's systematic repression against the people of Belarus, which since the stolen presidential election of 9 August 2020 has forced thousands of Belarusians to flee the country; reiterates that the ongoing campaign of systematic repression amounts to grave violations of human rights;
3. Reminds the Belarusian authorities of their obligations to respect the human rights of all Belarusian citizens, including the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association; insists on the need to ensure fundamental freedoms and human rights, the rule of law and a functioning independent judiciary in Belarus; reiterates its call on the Belarusian authorities to immediately commute all death sentences and establish an immediate moratorium on the use of the death penalty, as the first step towards its full and permanent abolition; condemns the new law allowing for the use of the death penalty against officials and army personnel convicted of high treason; calls for an end to discrimination against women and vulnerable groups, including persons belonging to minorities, persons with disabilities and LGBTIQI persons;
4. Reiterates that the legitimate demands of the people of Belarus for democracy based on human rights and fundamental freedoms, prosperity, sovereignty and security must be fulfilled; reiterates its previous calls for new free and fair elections to be organised under international observation by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR); recalls that the EU and its Member States did not recognise the results of the 2020 presidential election and do not recognise Aliaksandr Lukashenka as the legitimate president of Belarus;
5. Denounces the detention and sentencing of Andrzej Poczobut and the sentencing of Ales Bialiatski, Valiantsin Stefanovich, Zmitser Salauyou and Uladzimir Labkovich, as they highlight the regime's efforts to suppress all civic engagement for the defence of human rights and all independent journalistic work in the country; denounces the numerous violations of their right to a fair trial and calls for their immediate and unconditional release, as well as their full rehabilitation and compensation;
6. Condemns the sentencing *in absentia* of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, leader of the Belarusian democratic opposition and the Head of the United Transitional Cabinet, and other figures of the Coordination Council, namely Pavel Latushka, Maryia Maroz,

Volha Kavalkova and Siarhei Dyleuski; rejects the court's verdict, according to which exercising the democratic right to stand in elections constitutes 'conspiracy to seize power'; demands that the Lukashenka regime repeal the sentences and drop all charges levelled against the four activists; insists that no activist sentenced for their support for, or active participation in, the pro-democratic opposition should be barred from running for elected office in Belarus; calls on the Member States, notably those hosting these prominent members of the democratic forces of Belarus, to ensure their safety and protection against Lukashenka's regime;

7. Condemns the intense harassment and persecution of trade unions; denounces the politically motivated sentences against independent trade union leaders such as Henadz Fiadynich, Vasil Berasneu and Vatslau Areshka, and the members of the Rabochy Rukh (Workers' Movement) group, which illustrate a complete disregard for their human rights and clear violations of international labour conventions;
8. Condemns the persecution of the Polish, Lithuanian and other national minority groups in Belarus and their representatives, including the decisions aiming to shut down Polish and Lithuanian schools and eliminate education in these languages, as well as the destruction of Polish cemeteries and heritage; calls on the Belarusian authorities to cease all measures taken against national minorities and respect their rights, including their right to education in minority languages;
9. Denounces the fact that politically motivated trials are held behind closed doors and without due process of law, thereby breaching the country's international obligations and commitments, resulting in the harsh and unjustified sentences handed down to opposition leaders; calls on the EU Delegation for relations with Belarus and the Member States' embassies in Belarus to continue observing and monitoring the trials of all political prisoners; encourages the Council and the Commission to identify novel avenues to work towards the release of all political prisoners; calls on the International Committee of the Red Cross and other organisations to visit political prisoners, especially those with serious health issues;
10. Condemns the Law on Citizenship, signed by Aliaksandr Lukashenka, which opens up the possibility of Belarusians living abroad being deprived of their citizenship; underlines that the Belarusian authorities are violating Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to which Belarus is a party, which safeguards the right to have a nationality and prohibits its arbitrary deprivation; urges the Belarusian authorities to cease 'The Way Home' programme;
11. 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, including Aliaksandr Lukashenka, who are responsible for, or complicit in, systematic violence and repression and crimes against humanity;
12. Reiterates its strong condemnation of Belarus's involvement in Russia's unjustified and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine; condemns the belligerent rhetoric of the Lukashenka regime against Ukraine and the massive spread of propaganda and

disinformation about the war of aggression; reiterates that Lukashenka and other Belarusian officials share responsibility for this war of aggression and for war crimes committed in Ukraine and should be held accountable in a special tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine and other appropriate international courts, and calls for the EU and its Member States to support efforts in this direction; expresses its support to the Belarusian volunteers and partisans fighting for Belarus's independence and helping Ukraine defend itself against Russia's war of aggression; recognises that the Lukashenka regime is an accomplice in state sponsorship of terrorism and an accomplice of a state which uses the means of terrorism;

13. Notes with concern the continuing so-called integration of Russia and Belarus in several fields, which amounts to de facto occupation, and in particular the progressive militarisation of Belarus and the region, including through the presence of Russian troops in Belarus, which represents a challenge for the security and stability of the European continent, and which goes against the will of the Belarusian people; deplores Belarus's decision to renounce its non-nuclear status;
14. Calls for the EU and its Member States to broaden and strengthen the EU sanctions against individuals and entities responsible for the repression in Belarus and to include all individuals complicit in the regime's repression against the democratic opposition and political protesters, including judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement, prison and penal colony officials, and ensure the sanctions' proper enforcement; expresses its regret that Belarus was not included in the 10th package of sanctions against Russia and those that support it; calls for the adoption of credible sanctions against the Belarusian individuals and entities supporting Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and for the adoption of the necessary measures to avoid the circumvention of the EU sanctions on Russia through Belarus and to mirror the restrictive measures imposed on Russia on the Lukashenka regime in Belarus; calls for potash, the main source of the regime's income, to be included on the sanctions list;
15. Calls for the EU and its Member States to continue raising the situation in Belarus in all relevant European and international organisations, in particular the UN and its specialised bodies, the OSCE, as well as in the International Labour Organization, with the aim of enhancing international scrutiny of human rights violations, strengthening international action in response to the situation in Belarus and overcoming the obstruction of Russia and other countries to such action;
16. Calls for the EU and its Member States to cooperate with international partners, such as the OSCE Moscow Mechanism and the UN Human Rights Council, as well as human rights defenders and civil society on the ground, to ensure the monitoring, documentation and reporting of human rights violations and subsequent accountability and justice for victims; commends, in this regard, the work of the International Accountability Platform for Belarus and calls for the EU and the Member States to continue their support; encourages the International Criminal Court to investigate and initiate pre-trial proceedings against the Belarusian regime in cases of crimes against humanity;

17. Calls on the entire international community to reject Belarus's bid for the non-permanent seat from the Eastern European Group on the UN Security Council for 2024-2025;
18. Encourages the Member States to work towards reinforcing the mandate and office of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) examination on Belarus in order to receive and process effectively individual complaints from the citizens of Belarus; expresses its support for the call by international and Belarusian civil society organisations on 13 February 2023 for member and observer states of the UN Human Rights Council to establish an independent investigative mechanism to complement and follow up on the work of the existing OHCHR examination, and calls for this mechanism's work to be sufficiently resourced and funded;
19. Highlights the critical role which the independent media, trade unions and civil society organisations play in affirming the democratic aspirations of the Belarusian people, whether in Belarus or in exile; calls for the EU institutions to enhance capacity-building support to Belarus's civil society, free media, independent trade unions, and pro-democracy activists both in Belarus and in exile; calls on the Commission and the Member States to continue to provide support to Belarusian civil society, the independent media and the democratic political groups and structures, including the Coordination Council and the United Transitional Cabinet; calls on Belarusian democratic forces to maintain and promote unity, based on the objective of a free, democratic, and independent Belarus;
20. Calls for the EU institutions and the Member States to provide support and protection to human rights defenders and civil society in Belarus who are facing a severe crackdown, including by issuing emergency visas to leave Belarus if needed; calls for the EU institutions to continue to support Member States' efforts to protect and welcome Belarusians forced to flee their country; calls on the Member States to provide support to those Belarusians residing in the EU whose identity documents are expiring and who have no means of renewing them since they cannot return to Belarus;
21. Condemns the Lukashenka regime's efforts to efface Belarusian culture and to pursue a policy of Russification of the Belarusian people; calls for the EU to support Belarusian culture and Belarusian cultural organisations; condemns the refusal to hold the trial of Ales Bialiatski in the Belarusian instead of the Russian language, and to deny Ales Bialiatski's request for an interpreter, which demonstrates the anti-Belarusian policy of the Lukashenka regime; supports the Belarusian people's celebration of 25 March, the day when Belarus's independence was proclaimed in 1918;
22. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take steps to ensure that businesses operating in Belarus, both foreign and domestic, exercise particular diligence and uphold their responsibility to respect human rights throughout both their operations and their supply chains, in accordance with the UN Guiding Principles; calls on all EU-based companies to terminate their relations with any Belarusian suppliers which openly support the violent Lukashenka regime, or otherwise violate the UN Guiding Principles;

calls on the Council to impose sanctions on any non-compliant Belarusian or international companies; urges the Lukashenka regime to end its practice of imposing forced labour in penal colonies;

23. Calls on the Commission to establish a task force that will open a policy dialogue with the representatives of democratic Belarus in order to work on a comprehensive multi-sectoral agreement that will be the foundation of cooperation with a democratic Belarus, once the current regime is no longer in power; reiterates that this should be coupled with a financial and administrative resource plan, which should be implemented in order to carry out and finance the necessary reforms in the country once this is possible; welcomes the establishment of the Mission for Democratic Belarus in Brussels and calls for the EU institutions to support the Mission and the People's Embassies of Belarus;
24. Reiterates the importance of formalising the relationship between Belarusian democratic forces and Parliament in order to strengthen Belarusian representation on the international scene; calls, therefore, for renewed, officially recognised democratic Belarusian representation to the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly and the Delegation for relations with Belarus;
25. Underlines the importance of strengthening EU unity concerning Belarus, including as regards the diplomatic isolation of the current regime; condemns any actions, including high-ranking visits to the de facto authorities in Minsk, which could cast doubt on the Union's unequivocal non-recognition of the Lukashenka regime; in this context, deplores the 13 February 2023 visit to Minsk by the Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó, which contradicts the EU policy on Belarus and on Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, and disapproves of the continuing issuance by some Member States of Schengen visas to individuals close to Aliaksandr Lukashenka;
26. Reiterates its condemnation of the recent decision of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to allow Belarusian athletes to compete in qualifications for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games under a neutral flag, which runs counter to the multifaceted isolation of Belarus and will be used by the regime for propaganda purposes; calls on the Member States and the international community to exert pressure on the IOC to reverse this decision and to adopt a similar position on any other sporting, cultural or scientific events;
27. 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 United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the International Labour Organization, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the representatives of the Belarusian democratic forces and the de facto authorities of the Republic of Belarus.

