

The EU must undertake a comprehensive review of its relations with Belarus

Members of the Foreign Affairs Committee say negotiations on the EU-Belarus Partnership Priorities must be suspended until new, free and fair presidential elections can be organised.

On Monday, the [Foreign Affairs Committee](#) adopted a set of recommendations on how the EU should reassess its relations with Belarus, by 60 votes in favour, 7 against and 1 abstention. The assessment takes stock of both developments before and after the disputed presidential elections held in the country on 9 August this year, which resulted in a popular uprising against the current regime.

The text reiterates many aspects of the [European Parliament's latest resolution on Belarus](#), adopted on 17 September, and:

- supports the decision of the EU and its member states not to recognise the fraudulent election results as announced by the Belarusian Central Election Commission;
- underlines that Aliaksandr Lukashenka is not the legitimate president of the country once his current term of office expires on 5 November;
- unequivocally supports the people of Belarus in their legitimate demands for new, free and fair elections;
- insists on full compliance of election processes in Belarus with international standards;
- notes that Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, who according to the independent sociological surveys received more than half of the votes in the elections, is in the eyes of the Belarusian people their president-elect;
- recognises the Coordination Council initiated by Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya as the legitimate representative of the people demanding democratic change and freedom in Belarus;
- demands an immediate halt to the violence, cruel repressions, torture and crackdown against peaceful protesters, and that all political prisoners and imprisoned civil society representatives and journalists are immediately and unconditionally released; and
- calls on the EU to implement the sanctions agreed by EU's foreign affairs ministers and the European Council as soon as possible, targeting a large group of people with asset freezes and travel bans, including Aliaksandr Lukashenka himself. An EU human rights sanctions mechanism, similar to the US Magnitsky Act, must also be swiftly operationalised and implemented, according to the text.

A comprehensive review of the EU's relations with Belarus needed

The recommendations, addressed to Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell, the European Commission and EU countries' governments, also call for a comprehensive review of the EU's relations with Belarus, with a particular focus on how the European Union can better support the country's civil society and citizens. Any disbursement of EU financial assistance to Aliaksandr Lukashenka's illegitimate regime must be immediately suspended, says the text.

The negotiations on the EU-Belarus Partnership Priorities must also be put on hold until free and fair elections can be organised.

MEPs finally urge Russia not to engage in any actions that would threaten the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Belarus.

The full set of recommendations, which in addition to the political situation in Belarus also address matters related to economic and sectoral cooperation, people-to-people contacts, nuclear energy and many other things, will be available in full [here](#).

Quote

"The report provides a timely reaction to the events in Belarus, where for the 44th day in a row, the Belarusian people are demanding that their rights and freedoms must be respected. Over 12,000 peaceful protesters were brutally arrested, more than 500 cases of torture at detention facilities recorded and seven persons have been killed. Our message is that from now on, the EU's policy towards Belarus should be led by solidarity and support for the Belarusian people and sanctions against those involved in the crackdown on peaceful protests and the election fraud. We call on the European Council, the Commission and the European External Action Service to take urgent action and initiate a comprehensive review of the EU's relations with Belarus", said rapporteur [Petras Auštrevičius](#) (Renew Europe, LT) after the vote.

Next steps

The recommendations will now be subject to a plenary vote later this year.

More information

Belarusian opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya also [addressed Members of the Foreign Affairs Committee](#) and Subcommittee on Human Rights during their meeting on 21 September. You can watch the debate again [here](#).

Further information

[More information on EU-Belarus relations \(European Commission\)](#)
[The European Parliament's Delegation for relations with Belarus](#)
[EP Multimedia Centre: free photos, video and audio material](#)

Contacts

Viktor ALMQVIST

Press Officer

☎ (+32) 2 28 31834 (BXL)

☎ (+33) 3 881 72420 (STR)

📱 (+32) 470 88 29 42

✉ viktor.almqvist@europarl.europa.eu

✉ foreign-press@europarl.europa.eu

🐦 [@EP_ForeignAff](https://twitter.com/EP_ForeignAff)
