



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council No.1451 Vienna, 16 November 2023

#### EU statement on the International Day of Solidarity with Belarus

1. On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with Belarus on 12 November, we reiterate our support to Belarus' sovereignty and independence and we express our solidarity with the will of all Belarusian people to live in a free and democratic country. We call for free and fair elections in Belarus, to be conducted without interference, intimidation and fear of persecution, in full conformity with international standards, monitored by international observers under the auspices of OSCE/ODIHR in line with internationally recognised standards.
2. Our appeal is voiced especially in the context of the run-up to the parliamentary and presidential elections, which will take place in February 2024 and in 2025. We call on the Belarusian authorities to fully respect human rights in this context, not least the right to freedom of association, including for political parties. In this regard, we condemn the liquidation by the Belarusian authorities of numerous political parties in recent months. All potential candidates should be able to compete.
3. We deplore that the human rights situation in Belarus is further deteriorating and persecutions are ongoing, as outlined, *inter alia*, in the Moscow Mechanism reports. Systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations have been and are being committed in Belarus, which may amount to crimes against humanity, according to the UN Human Rights Commissioner's report. The number of political prisoners exceeds 1,500

persons, with many of them being subjected to torture, ill-treatment or held incommunicado.

4. We condemn all acts of violence, physical or mental, towards civilians by the Lukashenka regime, as well as the persecution of persons belonging to national minority groups. The citizenship and rights of all citizens must be protected, including their right of residence, speech, opinion, association, and other human rights. We reiterate our call for the immediate and unconditional release of all arbitrarily detained persons, including political prisoners, lawyers, human rights defenders, journalists and media actors, including Ales Bialiatski, Siarhei Tsikhanouski, Viktar Babaryka, Maria Kolesnikova, Nastya Loika, Ihar and Darya Losik, and Andrzej Poczobut, among many others. We also pay tribute to all political prisoners, including those who lost their lives at the hands of the regime as a result of ill-treatment, brutality and denial of medical care, including Vitold Ashurak, Dzmitry Dudoits, Aliaksandr Vikhor, Mikalai Klimovicz, Dzmitry Sarokin and Ales Pushkin.
5. More than three years have passed since the fraudulent presidential elections in Belarus. The EU strongly condemns the still ongoing instrumentalisation of migration by the Belarusian regime for its political purposes, artificially creating migratory pressure on the EU border, the regime's involvement in Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, and its participation in spreading propaganda and disinformation. We also condemn any involvement and assistance by Belarus in the illegal deportation of Ukrainian children by Russia.
6. The EU also deplores that Belarusian authorities still apply the death penalty, which represents a violation of the inalienable right to life and the ultimate denial of human dignity.
7. The EU supports the right of the Belarusian people to choose their own future, and will continue to speak with one voice in support of their democratic aspirations. We will continue to stand by the Belarusian people in these difficult times. The EU reaffirms its readiness to continue working

together with the representatives of the Belarusian democratic forces and civil society.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, ALBANIA\*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA\*, and the EFTA country ICELAND, member of the European Economic Area, as well as SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

\* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.