

Belarus: Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the escalation of violence and intimidation against members of the Coordination Council



The European Union deplores the increasingly open disregard for the rule of law in Belarus, in particular the escalation of violence and forced exile of members of the Coordination Council, in violation of Belarus' domestic laws and its international obligations.

All Presidium members of the Coordination Council, except Nobel Prize Laureate Sviatlana Alexievich, have been arrested or forced into exile. In solidarity, EU diplomats are staying with her intermittently. Maxim Znak, Maryja Kaliesnikava, Siarhei Dyleusky, Liliya Ulasova have been illegally arrested. Earlier, Pavel Latushka and Volha Kavalkova had been forced into exile.

Civil society and actors engaged in discussions on the future of Belarus, including members of the Coordination Council, must be protected from intimidation, forced exile, arbitrary arrest and violence. The EU therefore urges the Belarusian authorities to release immediately all unlawfully detained persons, including political prisoners, and to ensure that such unlawful acts do not continue/are not repeated.

The European Union recalls the need for an inclusive national dialogue with broader society, in particular the Coordination Council, leading to a peaceful solution and responding positively to demands of the Belarusian people for new democratic elections. The harassment of, violence against, and forced exile of members of the Coordination Council and other representatives of civil society runs counter to this objective. The impressive commitment of the Belarusian people to a democratic future and persisting call for respect of their fundamental rights deserve a different answer.

The EU reiterates its determination to impose sanctions on individuals responsible for violence, the repression of peaceful protests and the falsification of election results and is ready to take further restrictive measures as necessary.