

EU imposes sanctions on Belarusian economy



The Council today introduced **new restrictive measures against the Belarusian regime** to respond to the escalation of serious human rights violations in Belarus and the violent repression of civil society, democratic opposition and journalists, as well as to the forced landing of a Ryanair flight in Minsk on 23 May 2021 and the related detention of journalist Raman Pratasevich and Sofia Sapega.

The **new targeted economic sanctions** include the prohibition to directly or indirectly sell, supply, transfer or export to anyone in Belarus equipment, technology or software intended primarily for use in the monitoring or **interception of the internet and of telephone communications**, and **dual-use goods and technologies** for military use and to specified persons, entities or bodies in Belarus. Trade in **petroleum products, potassium chloride** ('potash'), and goods used for the production or manufacturing of **tobacco products** is restricted. Furthermore, **access to EU capital markets** is restricted, and **providing insurance and re-insurance** to the Belarusian government and Belarusian public bodies and agencies is prohibited. Lastly, the **European Investment Bank** will stop any disbursement or payment under any existing agreements in relation to projects in the public sector, and any existing Technical Assistance Service Contracts. Member states will also be required to take actions to limit the involvement in Belarus of **multilateral development banks** of which they are members.

Today's decision fully implements the European Council conclusions of 24 and 25 May 2021, in which EU heads of state and government called on the Council to ban overflight of EU airspace by Belarusian airlines and prevent access to EU airports of flights operated by such airlines, and to adopt the necessary measures, including additional listings of persons and entities on the basis of the relevant sanctions framework, and to adopt further targeted economic sanctions. All of these measures have now been put in place.

Since October 2020, the EU has progressively imposed restrictive measures against Belarus. The measures have been adopted in response to the fraudulent nature of the August 2020 presidential elections in the country, and the intimidation and violent repression of peaceful protesters, opposition members and journalists. A total of **166 persons and 15 entities** are currently subject to restrictive measures, which comprise an asset freeze applicable to both individuals and entities, and travel ban on individuals.