

European Council conclusions on Belarus, 24 May 2021



III. Belarus

The European Council strongly condemns the forced landing of a Ryanair flight in Minsk, Belarus, on 23 May 2021 endangering aviation safety, and the detention by Belarusian authorities of journalist Raman Pratasevich and Sofia Sapega.

The European Council:

- demands the immediate release of Raman Pratasevich and Sofia Sapega and that their freedom of movement be guaranteed;
- calls on the International Civil Aviation Organization to urgently investigate this unprecedented and unacceptable incident;
- invites the Council to adopt additional listings of persons and entities as soon as possible on the basis of the relevant sanctions framework;
- calls on the Council to adopt further targeted economic sanctions and invites the High Representative and the Commission to submit proposals without delay to this end;
- calls on all EU-based carriers to avoid overflight of Belarus;
- calls on the Council to adopt the necessary measures to ban overflight of EU airspace by Belarusian airlines and prevent access to EU airports of flights operated by such airlines;
- stands in solidarity with Latvia following the unjustified expulsion of Latvian diplomats.

The European Council will remain seized of the matter.

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