

Press release – The EU needs to comprehensively review its relations with Belarus



On Wednesday, the European Parliament adopted a set of recommendations on how the EU should reassess its relations with Belarus, by 602 votes in favour, 44 against and 44 abstentions. The assessment takes stock of developments both before and after the rigged 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 taken by 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 will not be 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, under international supervision;
- notes that Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, who, according to independent sociological surveys, received more than half of the votes in the elections, is president-elect in the eyes of the Belarusian people;
- 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 repression, torture and crackdown against peaceful protesters, and that all political prisoners and imprisoned civil society representatives and journalists are

immediately and unconditionally released;

- calls on the EU to implement the sanctions agreed by the 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, and widening the scope to include Aliaksandr Lukashenka;
- supports the initiative to set up a high-level mission to Belarus composed of former heads of state or government, whose task should be to help stop the violence, assist in freeing political prisoners and promote political dialogue; and
- says the negotiations on the EU-Belarus Partnership Priorities must be put on hold until free and fair elections can be organised.

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](#). (21.10.2020)

Quote

“Belarus is in our immediate neighbourhood; its people share our European values and aspire to the same freedoms and citizens’ rights as EU citizens. They want to be decision makers in their own country. The European Union cannot be a passive observer. Active measures to prevent hybrid or direct Russian intervention in Belarus must be taken. I urge the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union to lead diplomatic efforts to prevent any interference and to support the Belarusian people’s democratic aspirations”, said rapporteur [Petras Auštrevičius](#) (Renew Europe, LT) after the vote.

More information

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