

Russia: High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell spoke t



On Thursday 20 August, High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell spoke with the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, Sergey Lavrov, on the situation in Belarus following the presidential elections of 9 August. In his capacity as coordinator of the JCPOA Joint Commission, the High Representative/Vice-President also spoke with Minister Lavrov about the recent US proposals at the UN Security Council.

On Belarus, the High Representative/Vice-President again expressed that the European Union considers that the recent Belarus elections were neither free nor fair, and that the EU therefore does not recognise the results.

High Representative Borrell stressed that the situation in Belarus has the European Union's utmost attention, as reflected by the recent meetings of [EU Foreign Ministers on 14 August](#) and [EU Heads of State or Government on 19 August](#). Following the two phone calls between European Council President Charles Michel and Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday 18 August and Thursday 20 August, High Representative Borrell reiterated the need for a national inclusive dialogue in Belarus leading to a constructive and peaceful solution in respect of the Belarusian people's fundamental rights. Any negative external interference must be avoided. It is for the Belarusian people to determine their country's future.

High Representative Borrell underlined the EU's clear message of support to Belarus' independence, sovereignty, and the democratic choice of the Belarusian people, as well as their fundamental rights and freedoms.

The European Union stands ready to contribute to efforts to facilitate a peaceful and constructive way out of the crisis. In this regard, the EU fully supports OSCE proposals for dialogue in Belarus and is ready to provide assistance to further them if required. As an OSCE Member State, the High Representative hoped that Russia could have a positive influence in supporting such proposals.

The High Representative also indicated to Foreign Minister Lavrov that the European Union is working on sanctions targeting those responsible for violence, the repression of peaceful protests, and the falsification of election results in Belarus. He also outlined the EU's intention to support the Belarusian population in light of the violence, repression and erosion of fundamental freedoms.

On the JCPOA, the High Representative reaffirmed his determination to continue to work with Russia, the other remaining participants of the JCPOA and the international community to preserve the agreement.

The High Representative had earlier that day wished a swift recovery to Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny. The European Union expects a swift, independent and thorough investigation into his suspected poisoning and, if confirmed, for those responsible to be held to account. We still expect the Russian authorities to stand by their promises to allow Mr Navalny to be safely and speedily transferred abroad in order to receive medical treatment, in line with the wishes of his family.