

Resolution on the situation in Belarus

2017/2647(RSP) - 06/04/2017 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the situation in Belarus.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D, ECR, ALDE and Greens/EFA groups.

Parliament **condemned the crackdown on peaceful protesters** and the repressions in the run-up to and during the demonstrations of 25 March 2017 which brought thousands of citizens from all over the country in reaction to the adoption of a Presidential Decree introducing the so-called ‘social parasite tax’, which sanctions unemployment by imposing a special duty to finance government expenditures, ranging from a fee of approximately EUR 240, which is about two thirds of the average monthly wage in Belarus, to forced labour for citizens who have been working for fewer than 183 days a year.

Considering the practice of preventive arrests totally unacceptable, Members called on the Belarusian authorities to **immediately and unconditionally release** and drop all judicial charges against all peaceful protesters, journalists, human rights defenders, civil society activists and opposition members who have been detained in connection with the current wave of demonstrations.

Members warned that in the event of failure to carry out such investigations, the EU may apply **new restrictive measures** vis-à-vis those highest Belarusian officials responsible for the recent crackdowns.

The Belarusian Government and the authorities are called upon to:

- end the harassment of independent media for political reasons and to put a stop to the practice of administrative prosecution against freelance journalists for working with foreign media without accreditation;
- stop the harassment of its civil society, to allow full and free legal functioning of public organisations;
- engage in a constructive dialogue with the opposition and civil society organisations,
- resume without delay the work on a comprehensive electoral reform as part of the broader democratisation process and in cooperation with international partners.

Lastly, Parliament reiterated its commitment to **work for the benefit of the people of Belarus**, to support their pro-democratic aspirations and initiatives, while stressing that the respect for fundamental civil liberties, the rule of law and human rights will be crucial for shaping further relations between the EU and Belarus.