Resolution on the situation in Belarus

2020/2779(RSP) - 17/09/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 574 votes to 37, with 82 abstentions, a resolution on the situation in Belarus.

The text adopted in plenary had been tabled as a joint resolution by the EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA and ECR groups.

Rejection of the official results of the so-called presidential elections

In line with the position of the European Council, Parliament rejected the results of the so-called presidential election held in Belarus on 9 August 2020, as it was conducted in clear violation of all internationally recognised standards. It will therefore not recognise Alexander Lukashenko as President of Belarus when his term ends on 5 November 2020.

Members strongly condemned the Belarusian authorities for their violent repression of peaceful demonstrations in favour of justice, freedom and democracy following the 9 August 2020 presidential election. They deplored the acts of violence, cruel repression and torture against peaceful demonstrators and those arbitrarily detained.

Towards free and fair elections

Parliament welcomed the establishment of the Coordination Council as a provisional representative of the people demanding democratic change in Belarus, open to all political and social actors, to prepare for new elections. It expressed its support for a peaceful and democratic transition of power following a national dialogue involving all parties, respecting the fundamental democratic rights of the Belarusian people. In this regard, it reiterated the appeals of the Belarusian people for a new, free and fair election to be held as soon as possible under international supervision.

Sanctioning those responsible

Parliament supported EU sanctions against those responsible for the falsification of election results and the repression in Belarus, including Alexander Lukashenko. It called on the Council to apply without delay extended sanctions against all those responsible for electoral fraud, violence and repression in Belarus. It also invited the Council to consider the possibility of including on the sanctions list Russian citizens directly involved in supporting the Lukashenko regime in Belarus.

Policy towards Belarus

Members urged the EEAS and the Commission to prepare a comprehensive review of EU policy towards Belarus, aiming to support the people of Belarus and their democratic aspirations. They called for an increase in EU funding to the Belarusian civil society, while freezing any EU fund transfers to the current Belarusian Government and state-controlled projects and stopping EIB, EBRD and other loans to the current regime.

The EEAS is invited to suspend negotiations on EU-Belarus partnership priorities until free and fair presidential elections are held.

Combating disinformation

Parliament stressed the importance of countering the spread of disinformation in Belarus concerning the EU, its Member States and its institutions, as well as disinformation on the situation in Belarus within the EU. In this context, it condemned Russia's hybrid threats in Belarus.

Condemning media and internet censorship and intimidation of journalists and bloggers, Members called on the EU to use the European Democracy Fund and other instruments to support media and journalists repressed by the regime.

Support for Belarusian women

Parliament called on the Commission and the Council to provide assistance to the Belarusian democratic opposition, including to the Coordination Council headed by Svetlana Tikhanovskaya. It praised the courage of the Belarusian women, led by Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, Veronika Tsepkalo and Maria Kolesnikova, and their supporters, who have played a major role in expressing and defending the legitimate demands of the Belarusian people.

The resolution noted that many Belarusians consider Svetlana Tikhanovskaya to be the winner of the presidential election and the elected President of Belarus.