Resolution on the situation in Belarus after one year of protests and their violent repression

2021/2881(RSP) - 07/10/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 506 votes to 29, with 139 abstentions, a resolution on the situation in Belarus after one year of protests and their violent repression.

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

More than a year after the so-called 9 August 2020 elections, the Belarusian authorities are continuing their repression against the Belarusian people. Almost 40 000 Belarusians are estimated to have been detained at some point for protesting against the regime. Moreover, there are more than 720 political prisoners in Belarus and more than 4 600 criminal cases open against Belarusian citizens, while not a single case has been opened against persons responsible for or complicit in the violence and repression.

The Belarusian regime is running a repression campaign against civil society and human rights defenders aiming to silence all remaining independent voices in Belarus. Member States, in particular Poland and Lithuania, have provided shelter, medical treatment and scholarships for thousands of asylum seekers fleeing persecution by Lukashenka for their democratic aspirations.

Parliament continues to stand firmly in solidarity with the people of Belarus, as well as with the peaceful protesters who continue to stand up for a free and democratic Belarus. It recalled that the EU and its Member States do not recognise Aliaksandr Lukashenka as president of Belarus. It continues to condemn the repression, torture and ill-treatment of the peaceful people of Belarus, the suppression of the media and the internet, and the beating, arrest and intimidation of journalists, bloggers and other independent voices in Belarus. The resolution called for the immediate and unconditional release and dropping of all charges against all political prisoners and persons arbitrarily detained and demanded an immediate end to the violence and repression.

Parliament also called for:

- the immediate and permanent abolition of the death penalty;

- an end to discrimination against women and vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities and LGBTQI persons.

Parliament considered the hijacking and forced landing of Ryanair flight FR4978 in Minsk to be an **act of state terrorism** and therefore called for the EU to apply **restrictive measures** against the persons or entities in Belarus and Russia that are responsible, with a view to

combating terrorism. The European Council is urged to agree on a comprehensive and strategic approach to **sanctions** against the Belarusian regime. Parliament also urged the Council to:

- proceed with the fifth package of sanctions with the utmost urgency by focusing on individuals and entities involved in the crackdown and repression in Belarus and on individuals and entities involved in human trafficking;

- further strengthen the EU’s targeted economic sanctions, focusing on key Belarusian economic sectors and public and private companies supporting and funding the Lukashenka regime, to include additional

sectors such as the steel, wood and chemicals sectors as well as all the remaining state-owned banks and key companies such as Belaruskali and Beltelecom in the economic sanctions package, and to ban imports of products which are often produced by inmates in penal colonies.

Parliament is committed to the effective functioning of the European Parliament's Platform on the fight against impunity in Belarus and to coordinating a timely international reaction to developments in Belarus. It also stressed the need to consider bringing the case of Belarus to the **International Court of Justice** over crimes committed on a **massive scale** against the country's citizens by the regime of illegitimate dictator Aliaksandr Lukashenka.

Furthermore, Parliament deplored the expulsion of EU and Member State diplomats from Belarus and stressed that Belarusian MPs and officials should not be invited to any international or bilateral events.

Member States and EU institutions are urged to deal urgently with the multidimensional crisis at the Belarusian border, to help migrants stuck at the EU's borders with Belarus and to provide them with the necessary support. The Commission is called on to urgently table targeted legislative proposals providing Member States with the necessary safeguards to **swiftly and effectively react and respond to migration instrumentalisation campaigns** by non-EU countries, in particular by ensuring strong and effective protection of the EU's external borders.

On the visa facilitation agreement with Belarus, Parliament supported the Commission proposal to suspend certain articles of the agreement targeting specific categories of officials linked to the Lukashenka regime. On the contrary, Member States are encouraged to further simplify the procedures for obtaining visas and residence for those fleeing Belarus for political reasons or for those who require medical treatment as a result of violence perpetrated against them, and to offer them and their families the necessary support and assistance.

The resolution condemned the continuous dealings between Lukashenka and Vladimir Putin to prepare road maps for greater integration between Belarus and Russia, including the **progressive militarisation** of Belarus. It reiterated that the EU must make it clear that if Russia continues its current policy on Belarus, the EU will have to introduce **additional containment and deterrence measures on Russia**. The Commission, the Council, the VP/HR and the Member States are urged to continue raising the situation in Belarus in all relevant European and international organisations with the aim of enhancing international action on the situation in Belarus and overcoming the obstruction of Russia and other countries to such action.