The continuing repression of the democratic opposition and civil society in Belarus

2022/2956(RSP) - 24/11/2022 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament has adopted a resolution on the continuing repression of the democratic opposition and civil society in Belarus.

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

Parliament recalled that the EU and its Member States did not recognise the results of the 2020 presidential election due to massive manipulation and fraud, and that they do not recognise Alexander Lukashenko as President of Belarus. It reiterated its **unwavering support to the Belarusian democratic opposition and civil society** and called on them to continue to act in the interests of the Belarusian people and to elaborate a plan to reform the country.

Members strongly condemned the unjustified and politically motivated sentences handed down to members of the 'Autukhovich twelve', as well as to the more than 1 400 political prisoners being held. They demand an immediate end to the violence and repression. Members also denounced the ongoing imprisonment of Ales Bialiatski, winner of the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize, and called for his release before the Nobel Peace Prize award ceremony on 10 December 2022.

The Belarusian authorities are called upon to cease all repression, persecution, torture and ill-treatment of its population, including violence against women and vulnerable groups and enforced disappearances.

Parliament condemned **Belarus' involvement in Russia's war against Ukraine** and the new deployment of Russian armed forces in Belarus. It condemned the Russian army's use of Belarusian territory for its aggression against Ukraine while endorsing the position of the Belarusian democratic opposition and civil society that Belarus should be recognised as occupied or de facto occupied territory.

According to Members, Alexander Lukashenko and those associated with him are also responsible for war crimes in Ukraine and should be held accountable before the international tribunal and the International Criminal Court. The resolution stressed the importance of maintaining Belarus' diplomatic isolation, reducing the diplomatic presence of the EU and its Member States in the country and maintaining the isolation of Belarus in international organisations.

Parliament called on the Council and the Commission to **prevent sanction evasion** and asked that the sanctions against Russia be applied also to Belarus. It called on the Commission, the co-legislators and the Member States to complete the legal regime allowing for the confiscation of assets frozen by the EU.

While welcoming the Commission's comprehensive economic support plan for a democratic Belarus, Members demanded that these funds be made immediately accessible to support the crucial work of civil society, independent media, trade unions and the Belarusian opposition in exile, as well as those fleeing the oppressive regime. They called on the Commission to continue to support **independent news media**, in particular new media such as Nexta, which has not received any financial support from the EU despite having a strong following in Belarus.

The Commission and the Member States are called upon to continue to support the democratic opposition, civil society and human rights defenders, trade union representatives and independent media in Belarus and abroad in order to prepare for the country’s future democratic transition.