



Belarus – ending repression, penalising human rights abuses, strengthening civil society

Position Paper

Working Group for Foreign Policy of the CDU/CSU Parliamentary Group in the Bundestag

We strongly condemn the brutal actions of the Belarusian militia against leaders and supporters of the opposition, the arrest of around 700 demonstrators and the persecution of civil society forces since the presidential election on 19 December 2010. These actions demonstrate total contempt for European values and rules on the part of the government of President Lukaschenko. They represent a bitter setback for the process of democratisation and the country's gradual convergence with the European Union.

We call on the Lukaschenko Government to release the political detainees immediately and to end the repression against civil society, non-governmental organisations and the independent media.

We do not recognise the outcome of the Presidential election which was neither free nor fair and fell seriously short of the standards of democratic elections.

We call on the Federal Government:

1. to continue to press for the release of the political detainees, to seek access to the detainees, and to extend financial and legal support to the victims of the repression;
2. to press within the EU for an entry ban to be imposed as swiftly as possible on President Lukaschenko and those responsible for the violent actions, political repression and falsification of the election result;
3. to investigate to what extent it may be possible to allow in particular those citizens of Belarus who are threatened with political persecution by the authorities of their country to enter the EU and for students, those working in the cultural sector and journalists to be issued with free visas;
4. to promote and support the activities of civil society organisations and initiatives, as well as of the independent media. It continues to be important to maintain contact with and provide public support for the Belarusian opposition in order to provide encouragement. Existing events such as the Minsk Forum should focus in particular on promoting civil society;

5. to strengthen programmes to support students, in particular those who are prevented from studying in Belarus, to support Lithuania and Poland with respect to receiving students, to create more scholarships for Belarusian students at German universities and to involve in this process those German universities which are already actively involved in relation to Belarus, such as the Freie Universität Berlin and the Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder);
6. to press within the EU for Belarus' involvement in EU programmes to be reviewed to ensure that these benefit civil society rather than the government and to suspend macro-financial aid through the IMF and the EU;
7. to seek to ensure that there are no high-level contacts between EU Member States and the Lukashenko government until such time as the political detainees are released and fundamental civil rights are restored in the country; representatives of the Belarusian government should be excluded from the summit formats of the Eastern Partnership, whereas cooperation with the Civil Society Forum should be enhanced;
8. to press for close coordination with the USA with respect to these issues. The EU should approach Russia, which claims to share with the EU the same ideas and values with respect to Europe's identity and future, to discuss developments in Belarus with the aim of adopting a joint approach with respect to President Lukashenko and his government;
9. to seek ways for the OSCE to continue to work and bring influence to bear in Belarus, particularly the OSCE media freedom representatives and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

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