

Il-Hamis, 29 Settembru 2005

20. Regrets that no agreement was reached on the reform of the UN Security Council, but welcomes the fact that the General Assembly will have to report on the Security Council by the end of 2005 on the basis of new proposals, which should take into account the aims of ensuring better representation in and transparency and effectiveness of the Security Council; reiterates its commitment to the prospect of a common European seat on the Security Council as soon as the political, constitutional and legal conditions for such a seat are met;
21. Supports and welcomes the new commitment by the UN on the Democracy Fund as an important tool for the world-wide promotion of democracy, and calls on the Commission and the Member States fully to support it both politically and financially; reaffirms its belief that the UN itself needs to enhance considerably democracy within its structures, and therefore underlines its call for a core group of democracies within the UN General Assembly;
22. Restates its opinion that the diplomatic representation of the EU to the UN is of the utmost importance for improving relations between the two organisations and for the influence of the EU on the international stage; therefore encourages the Council and the Commission actively to pursue the merging of their liaison offices and delegations into a common external EU delegation in each of the UN headquarters in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi;
23. Welcomes the call for strengthened cooperation between the United Nations and national and regional parliaments, which constitutes a recognition of the specific role of parliaments in the development and democratisation process;
24. Welcomes the renewed commitment on granting 100 % debt relief to 18 of the poorest and most heavily indebted countries made at the meeting of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and African Development Bank which followed the above-mentioned World Summit;
25. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN Secretary-General, the President and member states of the UN Security Council, the President of the 60th General Assembly and the President of the UN Economic and Social Council.

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**P6\_TA(2005)0363**

## **Belarus**

### **European Parliament resolution on Belarus**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Belarus,
- having regard, in particular to its resolution of 10 March 2005 on Belarus <sup>(1)</sup> and its resolution of 7 July 2005 on the political situation and the independence of the media in Belarus <sup>(2)</sup>,
- having regard to its Sakharov Prize for freedom of thought, which was awarded to the Belarussian Association of Journalists in December 2004,
- having regard to the United Nations resolution of 12 April 2005 on the human rights situation in Belarus,
- having regard, in particular, to the “EU action plan for promoting democracy in Belarus” adopted by the European Parliament’s Delegation for relations with Belarus on 23 February 2005,
- having regard to the Communication from the Commission of 12 May 2004 on the European Neighbourhood Policy (COM(2004)0373),

<sup>(1)</sup> *Texts Adopted*, P6\_TA(2005)0080.

<sup>(2)</sup> *Texts Adopted*, P6\_TA(2005)0295.

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- having regard to the resolutions of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on the situation in Belarus and, in particular, to its resolution of 28 April 2004 on persecution of the press in the Republic of Belarus,
  - having regard to the EU sanctions adopted on 2 July 2004 against Belarussian officials following the disappearance of 3 Belarussian opposition leaders and one journalist,
  - having regard to the statements by the EU Presidency on Belarus issued on 2 August 2005, 12 August 2005 and 30 August 2005,
  - having regard to the decision by the Commission to grant a 138 000 Euro contract to Deutsche Welle Radio for independent broadcasting via radio and Internet to Belarus for one year from 1 November 2005,
  - having regard to Rule 103(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas, instead of improving, the situation in Belarus has further deteriorated, which has led to a situation where human rights are blatantly violated, the Lower House is deprived of its legislative rights, and economic life is controlled by the President; whereas such violations include imprisonment of members of the democratic opposition and other forms of repression used against them,
- B. whereas over the past few years several political parties, 22 independent newspapers, more than 50 pro-democracy NGOs of different levels and different political persuasions and several educational establishments have been closed down for “technical” reasons, but whereas it is clear that in every case these organisations were being punished for criticising the President and his policies,
- C. whereas Viktor Halavanau, Justice Minister of Belarus, has issued a decree on obligatory registration of blocs of political parties, trade unions, coalitions, civil initiatives and movements, with the aim of preventing the unification of political forces that would support a challenger to Aleksandr Lukashenko in next year’s presidential election,
- D. whereas on 13 September 2005 Belarus President Lukashenko issued a decree granting himself the right to pardon property-related crimes in yet another move to further monopolise all power in the country, including judicial authority,
- E. whereas in April 2005 the UN Commission on Human Rights criticised Belarus on account of persistent reports of harassment and closure of NGOs, national minority organisations, independent media outlets, opposition political parties, independent trade unions and religious organisations, and harassment of individuals engaged in democratic activities, including in the independent media,
- F. whereas the closure of independent universities in Belarus has led to the inauguration of the European Humanities University for Belarussian students in exile in Vilnius,
- G. whereas politically motivated arrests and trials of activists belonging to the democratic movement and of independent journalists, and deportations of foreign citizens, are continually taking place in Belarus,
- H. whereas no progress has been made in the unsolved cases of a number of disappeared persons,
- I. whereas on 12 May 2005 the leadership of the Union of Poles in Belarus were declared illegitimate by the Belarussian Ministry of Justice, a printing plant under instructions from the government refused to print the Polish weekly “Głos znad Niemna” and fake issues were printed under the umbrella of the government,
- J. whereas on 27 August 2005 the Lukashenko regime called a board meeting of the Union of Poles in Belarus to force the resignation of the democratic, and legally elected, leadership in order to replace them with a board compliant with the regime’s wishes,
- K. whereas the situation of other minorities, including the Roma and religious minorities, has been steadily deteriorating: Protestant churches have been closed and the Evangelical Church banned,

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- L. whereas exercise of the right to freedom of information is thwarted, whereas all television programmes, both national and regional, are in government hands, and whereas all Internet connections are routed through a State-run corporation which has blocked numerous accounts and websites,
- M. whereas all cable operators are persecuted for transmitting the foreign channels not approved by the Belarussian Government; whereas on this basis Belarussian cable TV operators have been banned from broadcasting all Ukrainian channels as well as the Polish channel Polonia,
- N. whereas all registration of new newspapers has been stopped by the State authorities, trials of newspapers and journalists take place every day and many existing newspapers have received heavy fines which makes it impossible for them to continue publishing,
- O. whereas President Lukashenko has made it almost impossible for the international network of NGOs in Europe and Belarus to help children suffering from the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster to travel to various countries to convalesce,
- P. whereas Poland temporarily recalled its ambassador from Minsk after a series of expulsions of diplomats, rejecting President Lukashenko's accusations that Poland was meddling in his country's affairs,
- Q. whereas at the United Nations Summit in New York on 15 September 2005 President Lukashenko accused UN human rights bodies of allowing themselves to be misused to control other countries,
- R. whereas the Council approach towards Belarus has been lacking decisiveness and resolve,
1. Strongly condemns the Belarus regime's indiscriminate attacks on the media, minority and human rights activists, members of the opposition, religious leaders, and any person who attempts freely to voice criticism of the President and the regime, as evidenced by arbitrary arrests, ill-treatment of detainees, disappearances, politically motivated persecution and other acts of repression that flout the basic principles of democracy and the rule of law;
  2. Condemns the Belarus regime's amendment to Decree 460 on the regulations for accepting foreign aid, dated 17 August 2005, which extends the list of objectives for which external aid cannot be accepted: notes that it is now forbidden to accept and use international aid for "unconstitutional purposes", to overthrow authorities, interfere with the internal affairs of Belarus, prepare elections or referenda, organise meetings, rallies, pickets or strikes, or prepare and distribute propaganda material, and that it is impossible to organise conferences, seminars and meetings of any kind using aid funds from abroad;
  3. Condemns the regime's decision of 22 August 2005 to ban the Reformed Evangelical Church, which had been present in Belarus for more than 400 years and which was outlawed because the community had no legal address, nor could it have registered one, because the authorities had previously evicted it from all of its prayer houses, in violation of the Belarussian law on freedom of belief;
  4. Condemns the government's action against the Union of Poles in Belarus (ZPB) as a violation of the basic principles of the Council of Europe "Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities" of 1995 and as an attempt to curb the largest NGO and one of the few not controlled by the government; recalls that respect for minority rights also includes freedom of association and the recognition of the elected statutory bodies of that organisation; deplores the government's attempt to take control of "Glos znad Niemna";
  5. Condemns the continuous persecution of activists belonging to the Polish minority who wish to preserve the independence of their association; observes that the most active are harassed by repeated summonses to the prosecutor's office and the police, that Angelika Borys, the leader of ZPB, has been interrogated more than 50 times in recent weeks and that Tadeusz Gawin, a founder member and current vice-president of ZPB, has been sentenced to 30 days' imprisonment;

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6. Condemns the sentencing of ZPB activists Jozef Parzecki, Wieslaw Kiewlak, Andrzej Pisalnik and Andrzej Poczobut to up to two years' imprisonment on false criminal charges;
  7. Condemns the Belarus regime's complete marginalisation of the Roma minority in Belarus, whose basic civic rights have been curtailed, and strongly condemns hate speech against the Roma population in the official media;
  8. Condemns the Belarus authorities for not granting entry visas to a delegation of Members of the European Parliament who went on a fact-finding mission on 8 August 2005;
  9. Calls on the Council and Commission to create a programme of scholarships, visits and placements for NGOs and human rights and minority activists;
  10. Considers that, should the Belarussian authorities fail to improve the situation regarding freedom of speech, assembly and religion, and thereby allow it to deteriorate further, the Commission, the Council and Parliament should initiate the procedure to expand the visa-ban list to include representatives of Belarussian authorities involved in persecution; considers that the sanctions against President Lukashenko's regime should also include the freezing of assets of Belarussian authorities abroad;
  11. Emphasises once again that the further development of EU relations with Belarus will also continue to depend on the progress made towards democratisation and reform in the country and access for Belarussians to objective, free and transparent media, as well as respect for minority and religious rights and freedoms;
  12. Welcomes the fact that the Commission has launched further support for independent broadcasting in Belarus; stresses the importance of offering high quality and independent information to the Belarus public; calls again on the Council and Commission to act on their responsibility stemming from the Neighbourhood Strategy to support Belarussian civil society and make provision for a financial programme relating to the objectives of the European Neighbourhood Policy, adapting the support measures to the case of Belarus; urges the Council and Commission to grant as soon as possible even greater assistance to the free media and independent NGOs in Belarus and to extend broadcasting initiatives;
  13. Calls on the Commission to ensure that no "pseudo-NGOs", which are created by the Belarus authorities in order to obtain funds from foreign donors, receive any EU funding or any contributions from the EU budget;
  14. Calls on the Commission and the Council to support the democratically elected board of ZPB, as well as the boards of other democratically elected NGOs which are also subject to repression by the Lukashenko regime;
  15. Calls for the creation of an ad hoc high-level delegation to be sent on a fact-finding mission to Belarus and to report its findings to Parliament;
  16. Strongly supports the announcement by the President of the Commission of the posting of a special diplomat to Belarus to monitor the human rights situation, and calls on the Commission to accelerate the opening of a permanent representation of the European Union in Minsk, so as to be able to better distribute information, coordinate projects and monitor the situation in Belarus;
  17. Calls on the Council and the Commission to raise the issue of Belarus with the Russian authorities with a view to defining a common responsibility for bringing about concrete democratic changes in that country;
  18. Appeals to all EU Member States to introduce free visas for Belarussian citizens;
  19. Calls on European political parties and the political groups in the European Parliament to increase their contacts with, and political support for, the Belarussian opposition;
  20. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Parliaments and Governments of the Member States and the Parliamentary Assemblies of the OSCE and the Council of Europe.
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