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# Presidential elections in Belarus

## Greens/EFA motion for a resolution

*Tabled by* ***Elisabeth Schroedter, Marianne Isler-Beguin and Milan Horacek***

*on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*

*The European Parliament*,

 having regard to its previous resolutions on Belarus, in particular that of 6 February 2006,

 having regard to the European Neighbourhood Policy, which aims to extend peace and stability to countries bordering the EU, with a view to closer cooperation and to sharing the values of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and civil liberties,

 having regard to the statement made by the EU High Representative for the CFSP on 20 March 2006 on the conduct of the presidential elections,

 having regard to the conclusions of the General Affairs and External Relations Council of 20 March 2006,

 having regard to the statement made by the European Parliament ad hoc delegation to the Belarus presidential elections on 20 March 2006,

 having regard to the OSCE's 1999 Istanbul Summit declaration,

 having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the International Election Observation Mission established by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly concluded that the presidential elections held in Belarus on 19 March 2006 which confirmed Lukashenko in power did not meet OSCE commitments and international electoral standards,

B. whereas, according to these conclusions, Lukashenko allowed state authority to be used in a manner which did not allow citizens to freely and fairly express their will through the ballot box,

C. whereas the electoral campaign was marked by arbitrary restrictions, limitations and intimidation of opposition candidates and by the suppression of independent voices and the remaining non-state printed media,

D. whereas in the days before the elections the Belarus authorities took a series of legal measures against Lukashenko's opponents, beating and arresting dozens of campaign workers and candidates' aides, as the country's security chief warned that people who gathered to protest against the outcome could face criminal charges for terrorism,

E. whereas early voting was non-transparent and state employees were increasingly pressured, intimidated and threatened with retribution such as loss of employment,

F. highlighting the widespread human rights violations which have taken place in recent years, as pointed out by the OSCE and other international bodies, under the rule of Lukashenko, with his strict control of the State apparatus, the secret services, the judiciary, the mass media and law enforcement bodies,

G. whereas, as happened previously in the cases of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, CIS electoral observers contradicted the conclusions of the OSCE International Election Observation Mission, describing the elections as open and transparent,

H. whereas President Putin of Russia congratulated Lukashenko, referring to combined efforts to move forward on the path of building a state union and guarantee the onward democratic development of both nations,

I. whereas the European Parliament ad hoc delegation was denied a visa by the Minsk authorities to enter Belarus in order to observe the elections,

J. whereas during the five days following the elections the opposition forces staged continued demonstrations in the main square of Minsk to protest against the fraudulent way in which these were held,

K. whereas in the early hours of 25 March the police brutally stormed the tent camp set up by the opposition forces in the centre of Minsk and arrested hundreds of protesters,

L. whereas one of the opposition leaders, Alexander Kozulin and several other protesters, including journalists, writers and intellectuals, were arrested on the same day as they marched towards the jail where the other demonstrators were being held; whereas on 27 March Belarusian courts handed down jail terms of up to 15 days to the protesters who were arrested for participating in an unauthorised demonstration,

M. stressing the increasing political isolation of Belarus, the only Eastern European country with which the EU has not yet ratified the partnership and cooperation agreement,

N. stressing that, as a sign of its willingness for close cooperation, the EU included Belarus in the European Neighbourhood Policy, but that at present Belarus is not benefiting from the offer of increased cooperation owing to the lack of basic conditions to support democratic structures and economic development with public money, despite the hope of Belarusian citizens for increased cooperation with the European Union,

1. Firmly condemns the Belarus regime's lack of respect for democracy and international election standards and calls for new elections fully in accordance with international norms;

2. Expresses its solidarity with the people of Belarus, who have once again been deprived of their fundamental right to participate in free, fair and democratic elections;

3. Welcomes the impressive mass demonstrations against the non-democratic nature of the elections, which show the desire of a large section of society to restore democratic rights and political freedom in their country and the courage of the protesters who dared openly to defy the Lukashenko regime;

4. Calls for the immediate release of all the protesters who peacefully demonstrated in the squares of Minsk and reiterates its call for the release of all political prisoners;

5. Takes the view that it is now crucial to make every effort to support the opposition forces and strengthen Belarusian civil society in order to pave the way for real democratic change in the country; calls, in this regard, on the Council to work together with the Council of Europe and the OSCE in the framework of their special partnership in pulling together the resources necessary for this to happen, particularly in the post-election period;

6. Calls on the Council to react promptly and take restrictive measures such as a visa ban on and the freezing of assets of those responsible, including against judicial authorities and police officers, for the abuses during the election campaign and the harassment of and repression against the opposition forces, so as to further isolate the regime without harming the population;

7. Calls, at the same time, on the Council and the Member States to facilitate the granting of visas to the EU for students who have been expelled from Belarusian universities for taking part in the demonstrations;

8. Takes the view that the effectiveness of EU policies towards Belarus is undermined by the irresponsible attitude of the Moscow authorities who are lending decisive support to the last dictatorship in Europe; calls, in this respect, on the Council and the Commission to make clear to the Russian Government that democratic change in Belarus is in the interests of both countries and that its support for the Belarusian regime is one of the main obstacles to the development of a genuine strategic partnership between the EU and Russia;

9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Government and Parliament of Belarus, the Government and Parliament of the Russian Federation, the Council of Europe and the OSCE.

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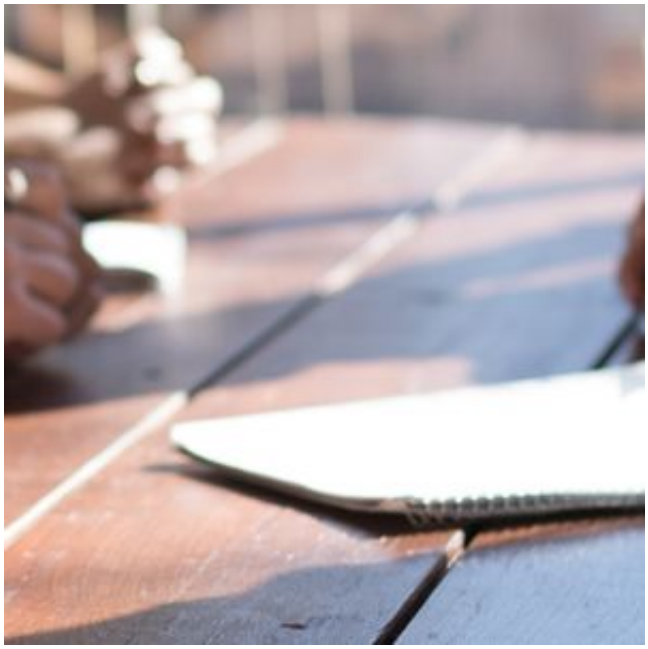
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