Press release | 23.03.2012

Belarus

Foreign ministers continue to tinker but wider action needed against repression in Belarus

In response to the ongoing human rights violations and state repression in Belarus, EU foreign ministers today agreed to expand the sanctions currently in place to new entities that support the regime (1). Commenting on the outcome of the foreign affairs council, Green MEP **Werner Schulz** said:

"Today's decision by EU foreign ministers to significantly expand EU sanctions against supporters of the Lukashenka regime is welcome. Hopefully, it marks the beginning of a more comprehensive response by the EU, which targets the EU's wider economic relations with Belarus, rather than relying on narrow sanctions. If the EU really wants to send a message to the Lukashenka regime that it should end repression, it needs to address EU-Belarus economic ties.

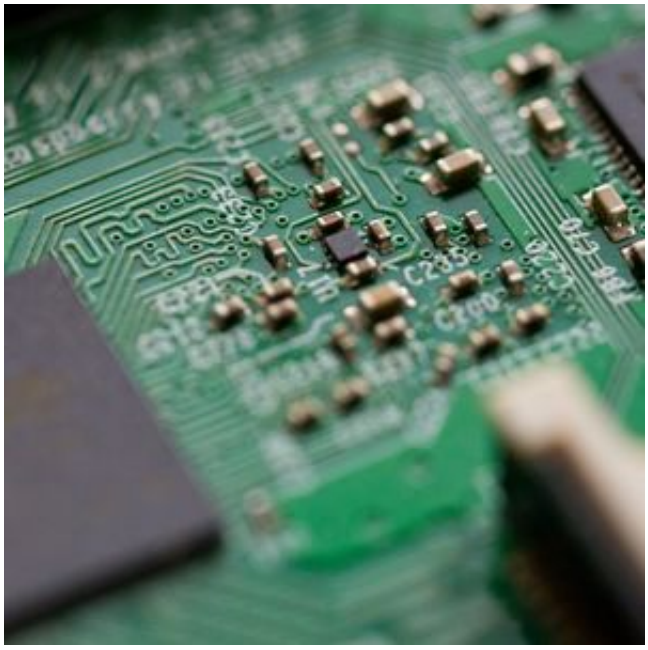
"With brutal violence and human rights violations intensifying, the EU needs to step up efforts to tackle the repression of the Lukashenka regime. Today's decision marks an important shift. The EU is a major market for Belarusian exports, including those from firms supporting the regime. Banning a comprehensive list of Belarusian companies from operating with and in EU countries would be a crucial way to put pressure on this odious regime to end its brutal repression."

(1) EU foreign ministers added 29 firms and 12 people to the sanctions list.

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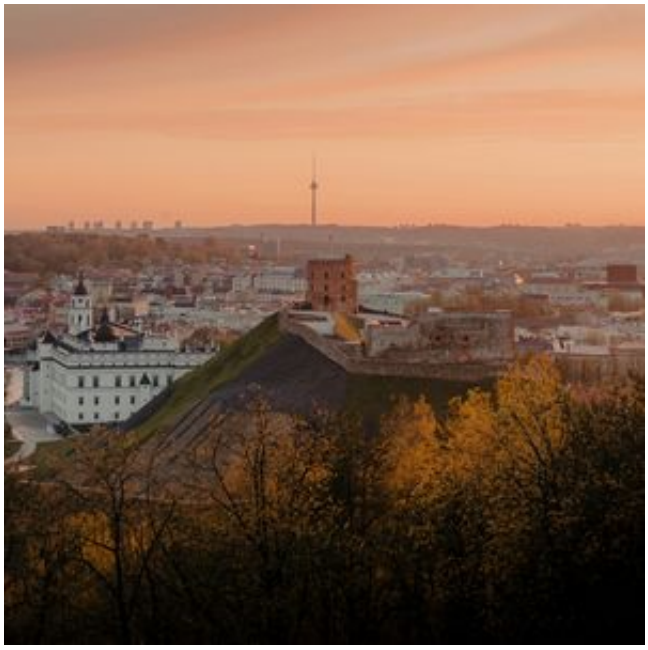
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