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Press release | 24.11.2021

EU must stand in solidarity against Belarusian regime

Belarus

Today, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, the leader of the democratic opposition in Belarus will address Members of the European Parliament at 12:00. The Greens/EFA Group are calling for the EU's unequivocal support for the democratic opposition and independent civil society in Belarus. The Greens/EFA Group condem the instrumentalisation of refugees and migrants at the EU's borders by the illigitame regime of Belarus. Later today, Greens/EFA MEPs will meet with Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya.

Viola von Cramon MEP, Greens/EFA spokesperson on Belarus, comments:

"The EU must stand behind the people of Belarus and demand an immediate end to the violence and repression employed by the Belarusian regime. The Council must strengthen its sanctions policies towards those aiding the regime, while developing a coherent and comprehensive long-term approach towards Belarus.

"The fifth sanctions package needs to be adopted by EU Member States in a robust and swift manner. All economic sectors that financially support Lukashenka's regime must be included, especially those in strategically important sectors for the regime, such as banks and financial services. The EU and the international community should consider a wider range of sanctions against individuals complicit in human rights breaches, such as detention, torture and murder on behalf of the regime.

"The best long-term solution for this crisis as well as for the people of Belarus, is for the illegitimate regime to step aside and allow for a peaceful, democratic transition of power."

Tineke Strik MEP, Greens/EFA Coordinator in the Civil Liberties Committee, who recently visited the

Polish and Lithuanian borders with Belarus, comments:

"Solidarity is our best defence against dictators and despots who seek to exploit people in need of protection against European unity. The crisis at the Belarusian border cannot result in more walls, fences and human tragedy, it must lead to a fully functional EU asylum policy.

"People at the border should be given the chance to apply for asylum, in line with the Geneva convention and EU law, it is illegal to push them back into Belarus. Member States at the border should immediately grant access to humanitarian organisations to ensure help urgently reaches people currently starving and freezing to death. The Commission must use all tools at its disposal to ensure that all EU Member States respect fundamental rights and the right to asylum.

"It is welcome that the EU will provide financial and operational assistance at the border, but this help cannot come at the cost of our values. Support for the countries bordering Belarus in this crisis cannot mean the EU turns a blind eye to illegal activities or the failure to uphold obligations under international and EU law."

More:

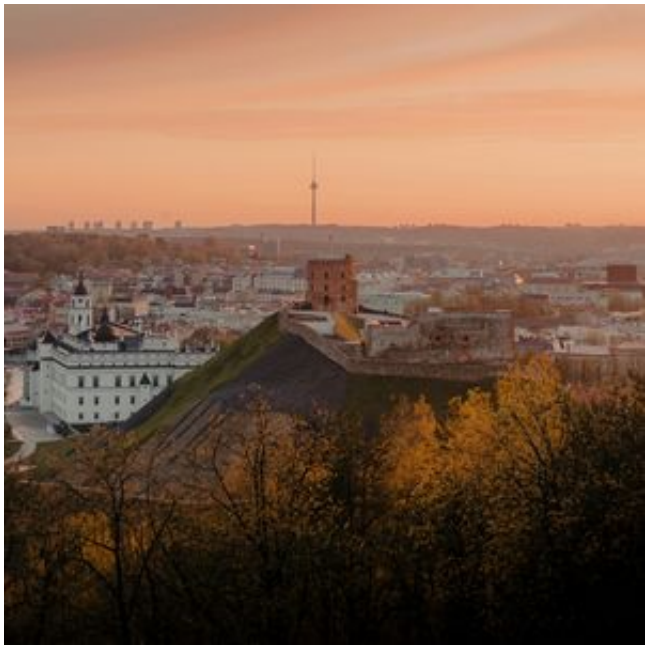
The address to the European Parliament by Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya can be viewed live from 12:00 here.

On Tuesday, the European Commission presented a package of measures in response to the crisis at the border with Belarus, announcing emergency legislation including €200 million in financial aid to Poland and Lithuania and promising new legislation on emergency border controls. The Commission also announced measures to prevent and restrict the activities of transport operators that engage in or facilitate smuggling or trafficking people into the EU. Last week, the Council amended the sanctions regime in order to broaden the scope for sanctions to tackle hybrid attacks and instrumentalisation of migrants.

October European Parliament Resolution on Belarus

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