



To:

Federal Minister for European and International Affairs of Austria, Alexander Schallenberg

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and Foreign Trade of Belgium, Sophie Wilmès

Caretaker Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, Svetlan Stoev

Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Croatia, Gordan Grlić Radman

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Cyprus, Nikos Christodoulides

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Czechia, Jakub Kulhánek

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Jeppe Kofod

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia, Eva-Maria Liimets

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Pekka Haavisto

Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, Jean-Yves Le Drian

Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, Heiko Maas

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece, Nikos Dendias

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, Péter Szijjártó

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence of Ireland, Simon Coveney

Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy, Luigi Di Maio

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Latvia, Edgars Rinkēvičs

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, Gabrielius Landsbergis

Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of Luxembourg, Jean Asselborn

Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of Malta, Evarist Bartolo

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Netherlands, Sigrid Kaag

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, Zbigniew Rau

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Portugal, Augusto Santos Silva

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania, Bogdan Lucian Aurescu

Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Affairs of Slovakia, Ivan Korčok

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia, Anže Logar

Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, Arancha González Laya

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Ann Linde

High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/ Vice-President of the European Commission Josep Borrell

Brussels, 1 June 2021

Dear Ministers,

Dear High Representative/ Vice President,

We, the undersigned members of the European Parliament, are writing to voice our concern about the unfair trials of civil activists and political prisoners in Belarus and to raise the importance of the EU Delegation and the EU Member States attending and witnessing the court proceedings on a regular and systematic basis.

It is high time to follow the hearings of the many political prisoners who participated in peaceful protests before and after the 2020 Presidential election in Belarus, and are charged with offenses relating to this. On May 25, four activists, two bloggers and the Belarusian Christian Democracy party leader Pavel Sevyarynets received sentences ranging from four to seven years in prison. Trials of the 2020 Sakharov Prize awardees Siarhei Tsikhanouski and Mikola Statkevich are upcoming. Of particularly high importance is observing the procedure for the arrested and abducted from the plane Raman Pratasevich and his partner due to the threat of the highest penalty (capital punishment). Witnessing of their and other trials will demonstrate European solidarity and provide much-needed moral impetus and support for detainees and their families.

Equal attention should be paid to observing the trials of high profile cases and the trials of less spoken about detainees. In addition to attending the trials in Minsk, the regional court hearings should also have the active presence of the EU and the Member States. We encourage a close coordination between the EU Delegation and the Member States with Embassies or representations on the ground or able to travel regularly to Belarus in order to gather data about the court proceedings and to express support from the EU and its Member States to unlawfully detained and persecuted people of Belarus. These people are innocent victims of the brutal and criminal regime of Aliaksandr Lukashenka. Their only crime is defending democratic values and ideals, shared by the free world, including the European Union, therefore, they deserve all possible support and assistance from the EU and the Member States.

We trust that you share our voiced opinion and will act accordingly by instructing the EU Delegation and/or your respective country's representatives to Belarus to attend the trials of civil activists and political prisoners. We hope for an exchange with delegated members of the EU Delegation and the Member States representatives to learn about their observation experiences in due time.

Sincerely,

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Juozas Olekas, S&D, Lithuania
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Ivars Ijabs, Renew Europe, Latvia
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