



Emergency resolution

Resolution adopted at the EPP Congress,
Helsinki (Finland), 7–8 November 2018



Situation in Belarus

- 1.** Being alarmed by the critically growing pressure on the democratic movement of Belarus, the continuing and increasing violation of human rights and the difficult situation for the political opposition, independent trade unions, civil society, journalists and other freedom defenders in Belarus;
- 2.** Referring to the commitments of Belarus to uphold the principles enshrined in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, which include respect of human rights and main liberties, such as freedom of thought, conscience, faith and opinion;
- 3.** Expressing concern that the nature of human rights violations in Belarus remain structural and endemic, underscored by the centralization of the legislative and executive powers in the office of the President, whose decrees are a key legislative mechanism in the country, undermining the role of Parliament;
- 4.** Regretting that elections in Belarus, including the October 2015 presidential election, the September 2016 parliamentary elections, the February 2018 local elections have been neither free nor fair;
- 5.** Expressing protest in connection with the mass detentions of 7-9 August 2018 and the subsequent prosecution of the independent journalists and editors of TUT.BY (www.tut.by), BelaPAN (www.belapan.by), Deutsche Welle and others, as well as in connection with the searches and confiscation of office equipment in the editorial offices of the independent media;
- 6.** Assessing the passing of the guilty verdicts on 24 August 2018 against Gennady Fedynich, Chairman of the Independent Trade Union of Radio Electronics Industry Workers (REP) and Ihar Komlik, Chief Accountant of the REP Trade Union, as an attack on the independent trade union movement;
- 7.** Noting that a similar criminal case was initiated in 2011 against the Chairman of the Human Rights Center “Viasna” Ales Bialiatski, which was unequivocally regarded by human rights defenders and the international community as prosecution for his professional activities;
- 8.** Noting the numerous cases of restriction of freedom of assembly and the continuing arrest and harassment of political activists for picketing near the “Kurapaty” memorial and organizing other peaceful protests;
- 9.** Drawing attention to the fact that, since the lifting of the EU sanctions against Belarus in 2016, the Belarusian government has ignored all appeals from the European Union regarding the observance of human rights in the country.

The European People’s Party:

- 1.** Condemns the violation of Internet freedom, freedom of speech and harassment of independent journalists in Belarus;

2. Calls on the Government of Belarus to immediately stop the pressure on independent media and stop the criminal prosecution of the following journalists:

1. Tatsiana Karavenkava (BelaPAN);
2. Hanna Kaltyhina (Tut.by);
3. Halina Ulasik (Tut.by);
4. Hanna Ermachenak (Tut.by);
5. Aliaksei Zhukau (“Belarusians and the Market”);
6. Pauliuk Bykovsky (freelance writer for Deutsche Welle, media expert);
7. Iryna Leushyna (BelaPAN);
8. Dzmitry Bobryk (Tut.by).
9. Maryna Zolatava (Tut.by)

As well as restore access to independent Internet resources “Belarusian Partisan” www.belaruspartisan.org and “Charter 97” www.charter97.org;

3. Calls for a review of the verdicts and termination of the criminal prosecution of the leaders of the REP Trade Union Gennady Fedynich and Ihar Komlik and demands from the authorities of Belarus to stop putting pressure on the independent trade union movement and urges the authorities to refrain from unjustified interference in its activities;

4. Reiterates its call on the authorities to implement the recommendations of the International Labour Organization with regard to trade unions, and to stop the repressions and prosecution of the leaders and activists of REPAM and BITU, to fulfil the obligations arising from the Convention 87 of the ILO, as well as the implementation of the 12 recommendations of the ILO on the restoration of the rights of workers and trade unions in the country;

5. Calls on the Government of Belarus to immediately release and rehabilitate all political prisoners in Belarus, including Mikhail Zhamchuzhny, and guarantee unconditionally the full restoration of their civil and political rights;

6. Calls upon the authorities in Belarus to fulfil their obligations in allowing for the right to freedom of association. Also expresses concern about the lack of progress in registering the “Belarusian Christian Democracy” party, “Social Christian Movement”, the human rights center “Viasna” and other public associations of Belarus;

7. Urges the Government of Belarus to comply with its OSCE commitments with respect to freedom of assembly and freedom of expression, allowing citizens the right to publicly protest both online and offline, to stop the persecution of the defenders of the Kuropaty memorial and participants in other peaceful protests;

8. Calls on the international financial institutions, governments and businesses to take into account the provisions of this Declaration when conducting relations and cooperating with the authorities of Belarus;

9. Due to the continuously deteriorating situation with regard to freedom of speech and human rights, calls for the European Parliament and the European Commission to take the necessary steps, including the revision of the priorities for cooperation with Belarus, as well as to consider additional possibilities to ensure for the protection of human rights in Belarus. EPP considers it necessary to reformulate the dialogue with Belarus placing the issues of the observance of human rights, the reform of the electoral and law enforcement system at the top of the agenda;

10. Calls on its member organisations to monitor the situation in Belarus as much as possible and to strengthen cooperation with the observer members of the EPP and civil society organisations in Belarus.