

**Emergency Resolution Nr. 5 adopted at the EPP Congress, Rotterdam (The Netherlands),
31st May – 1st June 2022**

**Ban Lukashenka's illegitimate regime, and support the Belarusian people's struggle for
freedom and democracy**

Recognising that:

- in 2020 the Belarusian people surprised the whole world with the dignity and persistence of the peaceful resistance to the merciless and violent repressions of Lukashenka's illegitimate regime after he clung to power despite the cost of lives, health and freedom of the citizens. For eight months the people of Belarus protested in the streets, calling for the active solidarity of the democratic international community. Belarusians had no weapons against the batons and guns of the riot police.

- there is an on-going humanitarian crisis in Belarus:

- At least 33,000 people were arrested on administrative cases and have been subjected to psychological and physical torture for participating in the peaceful protests, etc.
- At least five people had been killed during the protests, and seven people were in critical medical condition; the exact number of casualties among peaceful protesters remains unknown.
- Thousands were fired from jobs, forced to leave the country. Among those who lost their jobs are doctors, teachers, engineers, civil servants and many other professions
- 5000 criminal cases were initiated against the participants of the democratic movement and peaceful protesters.
- The independent mass media and NGOs were liquidated. Independent lawyers' licenses were suspended.
- To the date of 21 May 2022, there are 1204 recognised political prisoners in Belarus. However, according to the broader criteria the number of prisoners arrested on political grounds is 1453 and likely even higher as, in some cases, families of prisoners choose not to publicise information.
- In May 2022, the changes have been introduced to the Criminal Code of Belarus allowing the application of capital punishment for preparation of acts of 'terrorism'.
- Due to the ignoring of the COVID-19 epidemics on the national level, Belarus is among the countries most affected by the epidemic in the world (in terms of excess mortality per capita). The actual numbers are hidden from the public.

- The private sector of the economy is in a deep crisis – businesses were forced to close or to relocate.
- The harsh repressions against the Belarusian citizens with alternative opinions to the state ideology continue. On the day of “referendum”, 27 February 2022, 800 persons were arrested in Minsk for speaking out against the war in Ukraine.
- Poland, Ukraine and Lithuania received the largest numbers of Belarusians political refugees and people who left the country due the political and social crisis. In Poland, there are at least 150,000, in Lithuania – at least 20,000, and at least 38,000 in Ukraine before Russian’s invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 (however, immigration to Ukraine is hard to count due the visa free movement).

The independence and sovereignty of Belarus is supported by the majority of Belarusians. Lukashenka on the contrary is selling the independence of Belarus to Russia and the use of the Belarusian territory for the military aggression against Ukraine is direct proof of this. The most recent protests against the integration of the two states took place in December 2019 in Minsk.

Moreover, Belarusian men have been fighting on the side of the Ukrainian army since 2014, many of them have given their lives for Ukraine and were honoured by the Ukrainian state. Thousands of Belarusian civil activists have been providing humanitarian and legal aid to Ukrainians in the EU, in Belarus and in Ukraine since the start of war against Ukraine on 24 February 2022. Thousands of Belarusian citizens found a second home in Ukraine after the suppression of the peaceful protest in 2020-2021 and had to flee the war together with Ukrainians. The people of Belarus support the Ukrainian people’s struggle for freedom. A free, democratic and sovereign Ukraine is crucial for the freedom, democracy and sovereignty of Belarus and vice versa.

All said above and numerous other facts prove that Belarus cannot be equalled to Lukashenka’s illegitimate regime, which traded Belarus’ sovereignty and allowed the presence of the Russian army on Belarusian soil because of its full existential dependence on Putin’s regime.

We, the member parties of the European People’s Party, consider the Belarusian people, including representatives of Free Belarus who found refuge in our countries, as our friends and allies, and we reiterate our commitment to Belarus’ freedom, sovereignty, democracy and prosperity. We do not recognise the illegitimate regime of Lukashenka as representatives of the Belarusian people. We urge the European leaders and governments to redouble their

efforts to support the Belarusian people's struggle for freedom and democracy, and to ensure that maximum targeted sanctions are applied against Lukashenka and members of his illegitimate regime oppressing the Belarusian people and aiding Putin's aggression against Ukraine. We publicly state that the Belarusians are not enemies and the acts of discriminating, humiliating or violent behaviour towards them, as well as to anyone else, is not acceptable and reported cases should be treated as acts of racist behaviour according to the law. Unlike members of the illegitimate Lukashenka regime under EU sanctions, ordinary Belarusians in the European Union, must have access to legal services, residency, study, banking services, etc.

Ensuring welcoming policies towards the people of Belarus and Ukraine and supporting their fight for sovereignty, territorial integrity, freedom and democracy is of immense importance. However, the methods of doing so should be smart and not exclude people who strive to be part of the free world and share its values. E.g., Instead of disallowing Belarusian students to study at the European universities, these universities can adopt internal laws on prevention of spreading racism, totalitarian ideologies, etc.

We call upon all countries that will adopt the laws on aid to Ukrainian war refugees, to include Belarusians refugees from Ukraine who crossed their borders after 24 February 2022 and give them the same status as Ukrainians.

We call upon all democratic countries in Europe and across the world to accept political refugees from Belarus, to continue to support programmes for the Belarusians in the fields of education, business support, medical treatment, etc. We ask to continue ensuring the conditions possibilities for relocation of Belarusian private businesses.

We support the united democratic forces of Belarus, its leader, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, the centre-right coalition, which includes EPP members – Belarusian Christian Democracy, United Civil Party and the “Moment for Freedom”, as well as the Coordination Council, and we are ready to engage with their advice, expertise and recommendations in the process of providing effective assistance to the Belarusians who would like to rebuild their country on the basis of freedom and democracy.

We reiterate our demand for immediate and unconditional release of the political prisoners including the members of our political family - the leader of the organizing committee of the BCD Pavel Seviarynets, Tatsiana and Dzmitry Kaneuski, Ihar Salavei, Pavel Spiryn, Uladzimir

Niapomniashchykh, Aliaksandr Agraitsovich, Pavel Belavus, Andrei Kudzik, Mikolai Siarhienka, Ramuald Ulan, Aliaksandr Nahela and Andrei Kabanau.

We condemn the recent changes to the Criminal Code of Belarus, which introduce capital punishment not only for the crimes of terrorism, but also for the preparation of them. The judicial system in Belarus is dependent on the orders of an illegitimate leader and this change endangers the people unwanted by Lukashenka's regime, such as the current political prisoners.

We must stand together against the threats of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes for freedom, yours and ours!