



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council No. 1487 Vienna, 5 September 2024

#### **EU Statement on the fourth anniversary of the fraudulent presidential elections in Belarus**

1. Four years ago, on 9 August, the people of Belarus took to the streets to peacefully protest against the fraudulent presidential elections and Lukashenka's attempt to take away their right to decide their own future. We underline our unwavering support for the Belarusian people's quest for a free, democratic, sovereign and independent Belarus as part of a peaceful and prosperous Europe,
2. There are around 1 400 political prisoners currently in detention. They represent only a fraction of the thousands of individuals who have been in and out of politically motivated detention since 2020. We remain deeply concerned about the deteriorating human rights situation in Belarus and strongly condemn persecution and intimidation campaigns against Belarusian civil society, human rights defenders, free media and journalists, political opponents, independent trade unionists, representatives of national minorities, and ultimately against all citizens expressing their views, both in and outside the country.
3. At least six political prisoners have lost their lives in detention, and many have been held incommunicado for more than a year. Some of the detainees have life threatening conditions and require urgent medical assistance. Such treatment of prisoners and detainees is in violation of international law and Belarus' own commitments. Some of these violations, according to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' latest report, may amount to crimes against humanity. We call for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners and unjustly detained people, with an urgent priority on prisoners with

serious health issues or disabilities, prisoners over the age of 60 and minors. We also urge the Belarusian authorities to abolish the death penalty and, as a first step, to introduce a moratorium.

4. In addition to wide-scale domestic repression, the Belarusian regime has been complicit in Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine. Besides political, military and logistical support, it has contributed to the illegal deportation of Ukrainian children from the territories of Ukraine temporarily occupied by Russia. Since 2021, the regime has also orchestrated migration pressure on the EU's external borders.
5. For all this, the EU has imposed several rounds of sanctions against the regime and its supporters. On 5 August, the EU adopted additional sanctions against 28 individuals involved in, inter alia, human rights violations, politically motivated trials, and state propaganda activities. Altogether, 261 individuals and 37 entities and bodies are currently subject to EU individual restrictive measures. The EU also leads efforts to ensure accountability for those responsible for human rights violations, at the UN and other international fora, and to support international initiatives to hold all perpetrators to account.
6. The EU remains united in its support to the brave people of Belarus, the Belarusian democratic movement, and civil society in their quest for a free, democratic, sovereign and independent Belarus as part of a peaceful Europe. Once Belarus embarks on a democratic transition, the EU will provide support to stabilise its economy and reform its institutions, including through a Comprehensive Plan of Economic Support of up to EUR 3 billion. We will continue to ensure that the voices of the Belarusian people are heard.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, ALBANIA\*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA\*, as well as ANDORRA align themselves with this statement.

\*North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.