



March 7, 2023

The Honorable Von der Leyen
President of the European
Commission

The Honorable Roberta Metsola
President of the European
Parliament

The Honorable Charles
Michel
President of the European
Council

EU Heads of State and Governments

**Dear President Von der Leyen, dear President Metsola, dear President Michel
Dear Presidents and Prime Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We, organizations, movements and initiatives representing the citizens of the Republic of Belarus, collectively the organization “Belarus Democratic Forum”, represent the people of Belarus, are working to help the people of Belarus eliminate the tyrannical Lukashenko regime.

Over the past three years, as recorded by multiple international organizations, more than fifty thousand people have been repressed for political reasons in Belarus. According to data from human rights groups, there are about 1,500 political prisoners in Belarus; however, in reality, there are up to 5,000 of them. Finally, dozens of people were killed by Lukashenko regime just for expressing their political position.

On February 2024, Belarus will hold the next parliamentary elections. As usual, Lukashenko will appoint his own people, so these elections will not represent the people of Belarus. The election campaign will start in November this year. We consider it important to know the opinion of different political actors about the situation in Belarus and possible actions from the EU and the international community to help bring democracy and freedom to the people of Belarus. This can help to develop joint actions to oppose the Lukashenko regime more efficiently rather than just following his footsteps.

Lukashenko continues to publicly threaten the abductions and elimination of political opponents in exile. Inside Belarus, human rights are grossly violated and the legal system has been destroyed and arbitrariness reigns. The dictatorship in Belarus threatens the international community. Lukashenko’s regime is a grave challenge not only to the people of Belarus but also to Europe and the United States. Since 2021, the Belarusian regime constantly supports, facilitates, and often instigates illegal migration and human trafficking from Africa to Europe. It has committed a well-documented crime against the security of civil aviation by hijacking a civilian Ryanair aircraft for the purpose of kidnapping an opposition activist, which can be considered as an act of state terrorism. The militarization of the country and the possible placement of Russian nuclear

weapons on its territory increases the risk of a major war in Europe and around the world. These developments increase the likelihood that neighboring countries can be attacked from the territory of Belarus, as it is currently happening in Ukraine.

We therefore urge you to:

1. Issue an ultimatum to Mr. Lukashenko to release all political prisoners. Otherwise, all cargo traffic from Belarus to EU countries should be blocked. Furthermore, to take immediate and exhaustive measures to ensure the evacuation of all political hostages to safe countries.
2. Provide resource and financial support for the organization of online elections of the representative body (National Council) of the people of Belarus that could serve as a legitimate democratic institution in the eye of Belarus people and will serve the purpose of consolidation of all democratic forces around principles and values expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
3. To declare citizen A.G. Lukashenko a terrorist and his regime a terrorist organization according to the Geneva Declaration on Terrorism of March 21, 1987.
4. To initiate a criminal case in the EU countries against the citizen A.G. Lukashenko and others involved in crimes under the article crimes against humanities and for unleashing war against Ukraine.
5. Adopt an updated sanctions package against citizen A.G. Lukashenko and his family members, including a ban on international flights and servicing his Boeing aircrafts.
6. To impose sanctions on all state TV and radio channels of Belarus in order to block them on YouTube the spread of propaganda disinformation, and the incitement of hatred and hostility.
7. To hold, with the assistance of the European Commission and the European Council, a summit with representatives of the EU countries, as well as with the participation of the presidential candidates that challenged the dictatorial regimes in different years, legitimate chairman of the Supreme Soviet (parliament) of Belarus Syamyon Sharetsky, freedom fighters and opinion leaders.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Valery Tsepka,

First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (1994-1997), Ambassador of Belarus to the United States (1997-2002), Director of the Belarusian High-Tech Park (2005-2017), Candidate for the Presidency of Belarus (2020) and other Candidates of the 2020 election who are now in prison as well as other participants of the Belarus Democratic Forum