



Draft Resolution **on the** **Presidential Elections in Belarus**

ADOPTED

- (a) Having regard to the fact that the authorities of Belarus still pursue the policy of violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms as main democratic principles,
- (b) Stressing that Belarus made international agreements and commitments to accept and follow the UN and EU standards for a free and democratic society, pluralism, rule of law and human rights;
- (c) Taking into account the continuous persecution, harassment, arrest and imprisonment of opposition members, politically motivated arrests and trials of independent journalists and activists belonging to the democratic movements, expelling of the politically active students from the educational institutions, closure of NGOs, national minority organizations and educational establishments;
- (d) Considering that the right to freedom of information is thwarted, whereas the State authorities have stopped all registration of new independent newspapers, cancelled the subscription and prohibited newsstand sales, many existing newspapers have received heavy fines which makes it impossible for them to continue publishing, all television programmes, both national and regional, are employed by government for the manipulation of information, and all Internet connections are routed through a State-run corporation, which has blocked numerous accounts and websites, censors political information and terminates connections during important political events;
- (e) Recalling a newly adopted law the official goal of which is to prevent the state and the ruling order from actions which can harm the national security of Belarus providing a foreign state, a foreign or international organization with false materials on the political, social, military or international situation, in practice directed to civil society, journalists, activists of NGOs, as reported the chairman of the KGB, youth NGOs of Belarus mainly Malady Front and political leaders, president's opponents, and presupposes a prison sentence from 6 months to two years for anyone who criticizes Lukashenka's policies, claims to change the constitution, appeals for seizure of state power to international organizations, foreign states, the OSCE, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, or the Strasbourg Court and have a fundamental impact both on the election campaign and on activities of all residents of the republic;

(g) Expressing concern about the way the elections in Belarus have been held and regarding the changes in the Constitution which gave the president a right to be elected to the presidential post unlimited number of times, the exclusion of the representatives of democratic parties and movements from electoral commissions, the establishment of government monopoly on media and the use of administrative and public resources for the purpose of campaigning;

(h) Realising that the process of democratisation in Belarus depends on the outcome of the forthcoming presidential elections on March 19, 2006 and should be based on the principles of democracy: free, fair, equal presidential elections, transparent voting and vote counting procedure, domestic election observation organizations, international observers, opposition and independent media;

The Youth of the European People's Party (YEPP) urges:

EPP, the European Union and its Member States:

(A) To condemn the government of Belarus for the further consolidation of state repression and call on authorities of Belarus to stop the continuing violation of respect for internationally recognized human rights standards and to cease politically motivated prosecutions of political opponents, leaders of opposition, activists of NGOs, democratic parties and movements, politically active students and youth, human rights activists and any person who attempts freely to voice criticism of the President and the regime;

(B) To seize every possible opportunity to make clear to the Belarusian authorities that they are expected to honour and fulfill all their agreements and commitments in the areas of human rights and democracy;

(C) To support independent civil initiatives, democratic parties and movements, NGOs which activities are directed towards strengthening the development of civil society and establishing democratic model of policy;

(D) To help disseminate unbiased broadcasting about events at home and abroad through media inside and outside Belarus in order to overcome the government's monopoly on information with a view to overcoming the informational isolation of Belarus;

(E) To sustain the opponent of A. Lukashenka, the candidate of the united opposition forces for the 2006 presidential elections Alexander Milinkevich and support free and fair presidential elections in Belarus, conducted in a manner consistent with internationally accepted standards and under the supervision of internationally recognized observers;

(F) To promote international exchanges, scholarships for visits and advanced professional training programmes for leaders and members of the democratic organizations, students and scholars;

(G) To introduce cost free visas for Belarusian citizens;

(H) To emphasize that Belarus is a part of Europe, a direct neighbor of NATO and the European Union, and that the further fruitful development of relations between neighboring countries and Belarus will continue to depend on the progress made towards the forthcoming democratic elections and future democratic reforms in the country;

The Belarusian Authorities:

(E) To abolish the pressure applied to independent print media, including the prosecution of individual journalists, political leaders, activists of NGOs and youth organizations on such charges as defamation of the president and political regime, to assist the people of Belarus in regaining their freedom and to enable them to join the international community of democracies;

(F) To cease the harassment of all educational institutions in the country and to respect the basic principles of academic freedom, teaching autonomy and tolerance in education;

(G) To ensure the registration of all eligible candidates for presidential elections, to campaigning freely, fair and transparent, to give equal access to state controlled media, and to allow the representatives of democratic parties and movements to participate fully in electoral commissions, sufficient election monitoring by international observers and independent media.

The Government of the Russian Federation:

(A) To use its influence to encourage democratic development in Belarus so that Belarus can become a democratic, prosperous, sovereign, and independent state that is integrated into Europe.

Adopted resolution, 29 January, YEPP Council, Czech Republic