



Head of Division
Eastern Partnership – Bilateral Relations

DIRECTORATE Russia, Eastern Partnership, Central Asia
Regional Cooperation & OSCE

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Mrs Leonie Martin
JEF Europe, President
Rue d'Arlon 53
1000 Brussels
Leonie.martin@jef.eu

Dear Petitioners,

I would like to thank you for your e-mail of 8 September, expressing concern about the situation in Belarus, and reassure you that the EU follows developments in Belarus very closely and we keep Belarus high on our political agenda.

The European Union has reacted quickly and set out a firm line. On 14 August, the EU Foreign Affairs Ministers made clear that the EU considers the elections were fraudulent and therefore did not accept the results as presented by the Belarus Central Election Commission. These positions were reaffirmed on the 19 August, when the European Council stated that the people of Belarus had the right to determine their future.

We have issued numerous public statements, the latest on 12 November 2020 on the death of Raman Bandarenka¹, condemning violence employed by the Belarusian authorities against peaceful protesters and calling the authorities to release immediately and unconditionally all arbitrarily detained persons, including political prisoners and media workers. I also refer you to the 17 November joint statement issued by diplomatic missions in Minsk on the deteriorating human rights situation in Belarus².

¹ https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/88675/Belarus:%20Statement%20by%20the%20Spokesperson%20on%20the%20death%20of%20Raman%20Bandarenka

² https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/belarus/88853/joint-statement-eu-delegation-belarus-behalf-eu-member-states-represented-minsk-british_en



The EU has adopted targeted sanctions against 55 individuals, including Aleksandr Lukashenko, identified as responsible for violence, repressions and falsification of election results. Unfortunately, the situation continues to deteriorate and the brutal crackdown continues against peaceful protesters, journalists, members of the Coordination Council or simply against citizens. As a result of the deteriorating situation, on 19 November, the EU Foreign Ministers agreed to start preparations of a further sanctions package.

In the 12 October 2020 Conclusions on Belarus³, the EU Council highlights readiness to substantially step up its political engagement, sectoral cooperation and financial assistance to Belarus, provided Belarusian authorities respect principles of democracy, the rule of law and human rights. It further reaffirms that if a peaceful democratic transition should take place, the EU will use a variety of instruments in line with the Eastern Partnership policy.

I would like to confirm to you that the EU expresses full solidarity with the people in Belarus and will continue its work aimed at stopping repression and contributing to peaceful and democratic change in Belarus. The people of Belarus deserve better and their demand for new free and fair elections should be answered positively.

We shall continue to follow the situation very closely including via our Delegation in Minsk.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Tibbels', written over a light grey rectangular background.

[E-Signed]

Richard Tibbels

³ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/46076/council-conclusions-on-belarus.pdf>