

Stockholm 13 August 2020

Ahead of the extraordinary EU foreign ministers meeting over Belarus

Declaration of Support of the Representatives of the Swedish Civil Society to the Joint Statement of Nordic-Baltic Foreign Ministers on recent developments in Belarus

We, representatives of the Swedish civil society, including the Belarusian diaspora, human rights organisations, and many others are in constant contact with our partners, colleagues and friends in Belarus. We share the EU's and the Nordic-Baltic foreign ministers' condemnation of how the Presidential elections have been conducted and their proclamation as non-compliant to the globally recognized standards of democracy and rule of law.

We share the call to the Belarusian authorities to stop persecution of political opponents, to release all those unfairly detained immediately, to respect human rights and freedoms, and to immediately engage in a genuine political dialogue with the opposition in order to avoid further use of violence.

Further, we bring your attention in particular to the jailed husband of Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, Sergei who is held as a hostage by the Belarusian state. No genuine political dialogue is possible while the political prisoners and people who tried to protect their votes from falsification are not free and fully rehabilitated.

We also urge to reinforce the sanctions and to include in the sanction list the broad circle of those responsible for the falsification of the election results such as heads of the electoral commissions, as well as those responsible for the violence that was used against peaceful marchers. The individual cases and names of the responsible are documented by the Belarusian civil society activists and human rights organisations. There are extensive photo, video materials and testimonies.

We urge the EU to apply lessons learned from how the sanctions were used in previous periods and therefore connect their validity strictly to structural changes in the electoral procedures and specifically to the holding of new, free, fair and compliant with the globally recognised international standards elections. A future lifting of sanctions should also be conditioned by systemic changes in the area of civil and political rights, especially at the legislative level, guaranteeing a qualitative improvement of the human rights situation in Belarus, including in regard to freedom of speech, assembly and association, as well as the real possibility for political parties to operate freely.

This is what the Belarusian voters – the closest neighbours to the EU – are needing now when they are being deprived of the fair counting of their votes.

Östgruppen

Sveriges Belarusier

SILC, Swedish International Liberal Center

ForumCiv

Union to Union

OPC, Olof Palme International Center

Frilans Syd

TCO, The Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees

Saco, The Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations

LO, The Swedish Trade Union Confederation

Nordic Ukraine Forum

IKFF, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom – Sweden

Winnet Sweden

PRO Global

KIC, Kristdemokratiskt Internationellt Center

Green Forum

Centerpartiets ungdomsförbund

Grön Ungdom

Kristdemokraternas ungdomsförbund

Moderata ungdomsförbundet

Sveriges socialdemokratiska ungdomsförbund