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TEXTS ADOPTED

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**P9\_TA(2021)0293**

**Systematic repression in Belarus and its consequences for European security following abductions from an EU civilian plane intercepted by Belarusian authorities**

**European Parliament resolution of 10 June 2021 on the systematic repression in Belarus and its consequences for European security following the abductions from an EU civilian plane intercepted by Belarusian authorities (2021/2741(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Belarus,
- having regard to the European Council conclusions on Belarus of 12 October 2020 and 24 May 2021,
- having regard to the declarations by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on behalf of the EU, in particular that of 24 May 2021 on the forced diversion of Ryanair flight FR4978 to Minsk on 23 May 2021,
- having regard to the joint statement by the G7 foreign ministers and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 27 May 2021 on Belarus,
- having regard to Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/908 of 4 June 2021 amending Decision 2012/642/CFSP concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Belarus<sup>1</sup>, whereby it introduced a ban on the overflight of EU airspace and on access to EU airports by Belarusian carriers of all kinds,
- having regard to the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) of 26 March 2021 on the EU's support to the International Accountability Platform for Belarus,
- having regard to the report of the Moscow Mechanism rapporteur of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) of 5 November 2020 on alleged human rights violations related to the presidential election of 9 August 2020 in Belarus,

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 197 I, 4.6.2021, p. 3.

- having regard to the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation and the Montreal Convention for the suppression of unlawful acts against the safety of civil aviation,
  - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to all human rights conventions to which Belarus is a party,
  - having regard to the awarding of the European Parliament’s 2020 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to the democratic opposition in Belarus,
  - having regard to Rule 132(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas on 23 May 2021 a Polish-registered aircraft serving Ryanair flight FR4978, an international passenger flight between two EU capitals (Athens to Vilnius), while in Belarusian airspace, was forcefully diverted on the orders of Aliaksandr Lukashenka and was escorted by a Belarusian fighter jet to Minsk National Airport based on the false pretence of a bomb threat, jeopardising the safety of the more than 170 passengers and crew on board, many of them EU citizens;
  - B. whereas the Belarusian authorities did not discover any explosive devices, but detained two passengers – Raman Pratasevich, a Belarusian national, and his companion Sofia Sapega, a Russian national and student of the European Humanities University in Vilnius;
  - C. whereas Raman Pratasevich is a Belarusian journalist, activist and former editor-in-chief of the influential Telegram channel Nexta, which played a pivotal role in informing the population about the abuses committed by the authorities and in mobilising protests in Belarus after the falsified presidential election on 9 August 2020, thereby contributing to disclosing the regime’s systematic repression and serious human rights violations; whereas Raman Pratasevich had been living in exile in the EU since 2019 to avoid fabricated criminal charges and had been granted political asylum in the EU;
  - D. whereas Raman Pratasevich’s unlawful detention and inhuman treatment by the Belarusian regime, including forced confessions in staged interviews broadcast by the Belarusian state television, are of the greatest concern to the international community and underline the urgency of coordinated international action, in particular since Belarus remains the only European country that still applies capital punishment, and is therefore not a member of the Council of Europe; whereas Raman Pratasevich did not look like a person making confessions of his own free will, and whereas any forced confessions are prohibited under the Convention against Torture; whereas his lawyers are still denied access to him and Aliaksandr Lukashenka threatened to invite investigators from the Russian-occupied Donbas region to interrogate him; whereas Raman Pratasevich has been put on the terrorist watch list and thus risks facing capital punishment;
  - E. whereas the interception of a civilian aircraft constitutes a serious breach of international conventions in the area of aviation safety and highlights the international consequences of the continuous and incessant repression in Belarus for security in Europe and unmistakably demonstrates that the regime has become a threat to international peace and security; whereas the forced landing of the plane as an act of state-sponsored terrorism and the arrest of a so-called enemy of the Belarusian regime was designed to send a chilling signal to all of its opponents, in particular those living abroad, that the regime is determined to hunt them down and that they are not safe abroad;

- F. whereas an investigation by the International Civil Aviation Organization is ongoing; whereas in addition to Raman Pratasevich and Sofia Sapega several unidentified persons also disembarked in Minsk; whereas the Russian Federation has detained several Belarusian opposition activists who fled to Moscow and continues to support the Belarusian regime, also financially;
- G. whereas the Belarusian authorities have continued their repression against the peaceful Belarusian people, with many citizens being harassed, arrested and convicted for expressing opposition to the regime or to the widespread human rights violations taking place in Belarus; whereas more than 34 000 Belarusian are estimated to have been detained at some point for protesting against the regime, before and after the 9 August 2020 elections; whereas there are over 470 political prisoners in Belarus, including 7 minors; whereas some 3 000 politically motivated criminal cases have been opened against protestors, and there are 4 600 claims of torture, violence and ill-treatment;
- H. whereas the human rights situation in Belarus continues to deteriorate, with growing numbers of political prisoners; whereas human rights defenders have documented hundreds of cases of torture and ill-treatment, while several people are missing or were found dead; whereas inhumane treatment, torture and deliberate refusal to provide medical care continue in Belarusian detention centres and prisons, where several protesters, such as Vitold Ashurak, died under suspicious circumstances, while others, such as 17-year-old Dzmitry Stakhouski and Stsiapan Latypou, were harassed and threatened to the point of attempting to commit suicide;
- I. whereas on 25 May 2021 European Belarus activists Yauhen Afnabel, Pavel Yuhnevich, Maksim Viniarski and Andrei Voinich, opposition leader Pavel Seviarynets, blogger Dzmitry Kazlou, and community activist Iryna Shchasnaya were sentenced to four to seven years in prison on fabricated ‘extremism’ charges; whereas on 2 June 2021 political prisoner Dzmitry Furmanau, together with Yauhen Raznichenka and Uladzimir Kniha, were sentenced to up to four years in prison in what is known as the ‘Tsikhanouski case’; whereas on 3 June 2021 the court convicted a fifth group of defendants, consisting of the political prisoners Aliaksandr Khrapko, Radzivon Medusheuski, and Ihar Vinakurau, Andrei Aniskevich, Alena Loika, Halina Chuhunova, Andrei Niamirski, Dzmitry Kurhanau, Katsiaryna Smirnova, Mikita Uvarau, Safiya Nisht, Siarhei Ksenzhuik and Illia Palkhouski, in the ‘dancing protest trial’ by handing down sentences ranging from 18 months of home confinement to one year in prison; whereas on 3 June 2021 political prisoner Siarhei Piarfiliyev was sentenced to two years of imprisonment and his son Stanislau Piarfiliyev to two years of restricted freedom (home confinement);
- J. whereas the Belarusian authorities are continuing their crackdown and harassment of independent Belarusian journalists and engaging in deliberate attempts to hamper objective reporting; whereas hundreds of journalists were arrested, including two Belsat journalists who were subsequently sentenced; whereas dozens have faced administrative detention and experienced violence and several have been fined; whereas journalists have been placed in pre-trial detention and faced criminal charges; whereas there have been numerous reports of the authorities revoking the accreditation of journalists, including foreign media correspondents, several of whom have been arrested and expelled from Belarus; whereas on 18 May 2021 Belarusian authorities raided the offices of Tut.by, the largest independent Belarusian news site, arrested many of its staff and blocked its website;

- K. whereas human rights defenders, opposition politicians, civil society representatives, trade union representatives and other activists are systematically subjected to intimidation, harassment and restrictions on their fundamental freedoms; whereas there is no indication that the Belarusian authorities are investigating the thousands of reports of police brutality filed since mid-August 2020, or the killings of protesters; whereas the widespread impunity for human rights violations perpetuates the desperate situation of the Belarusian people; whereas the absence of the rule of law impedes their right to a fair trial;
- L. whereas according to the Belarusian Students' Association, an independent student union, more than 460 students have been detained, almost a third of whom are women, and more than 150 students have been arbitrarily expelled from universities, with many fleeing to neighbouring countries fearful for their safety;
- M. whereas on 31 May 2021 the Belarusian authorities further tightened the already strict travel rules, making it close to impossible for Belarusian citizens to exit the country, including for those who have long-term residency permits abroad;
- N. whereas there is growing repression against representatives of the Polish minority in Belarus, including the arrest and sentencing of the Chairwoman of the Union of Poles in Belarus, Andželika Borys, and the detention of journalist, blogger and member of the Union of Poles in Belarus, Andrzej Poczobut; whereas the Polish schooling system in Belarus is under growing pressure from the regime; whereas these actions have been accompanied by anti-Polish propaganda on state TV; whereas Lukashenka created a new public holiday in Belarus to be celebrated on 17 September to mark the anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Poland in 1939;
- O. whereas Belarus started the commercial operation of the Astravyets nuclear power plant without addressing all the safety recommendations contained in the 2018 EU stress test report, and as a result the Astravyets plant is unsafe and poses serious nuclear safety threats to all Europe;
- P. whereas the European Union has so far imposed sanctions against 88 Belarusian individuals and 7 entities, including Aliaksandr Lukashenka;
1. Strongly condemns the 23 May hijacking and forced landing of Ryanair flight FR4978 in Minsk and the detention by Belarusian authorities of journalist Raman Pratasevich and Sofia Sapega; considers this horrendous act a violation of international law which constitutes an act of state terrorism;
  2. Calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Raman Pratasevich and Sofia Sapega, as well as all other journalists and political prisoners held in Belarus;
  3. Recalls the Council's decision to strengthen existing restrictive measures by introducing a ban on Belarusian carriers of all kinds from entering EU airspace and accessing EU airports, and advises the Council to draw up a plan to facilitate Belarusians' attempts to leave the country; calls on the International Civil Aviation Organization and the European Aviation Safety Agency to investigate and take the appropriate measures regarding this unacceptable incident, which challenges international norms and standards; highlights that this grave incident significantly breached trust and that every state should act responsibly in fulfilling their obligations under the Chicago Convention so that aircraft can operate

safely and securely; calls on Ryanair to cooperate and share with the authorities all the relevant information regarding this incident;

4. Calls for a thorough assessment of the consequences of abductions from an intercepted civilian plane, not only for international air transport and aviation safety but also for overall security in Europe and the safety of Belarusian and other citizens exiled or seeking shelter or asylum in EU Member States;
5. Stresses that such an investigation should explore Russia's possible role in the terrorist acts perpetrated by the Belarusian regime; underlines that if this is deemed to have been the case, any Russian national directly or indirectly involved in the operation should be sanctioned under the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime (EU Magnitsky Act); highlights the importance of the EU's contribution to the investigation, including through the involvement of EU bodies such as Europol, Eurojust or the European Public Prosecutor's Office in the work of joint investigation teams and operations;
6. Reiterates its non-recognition of the election of Aliaksandr Lukashenka to the post of President of Belarus; considers the current regime in Belarus as illegitimate, illegal and criminal; continues to support the people of Belarus in their legitimate demands and aspirations for free and fair elections, fundamental freedoms and human rights, democratic representation, political participation and dignity; condemns the crackdown on the thousands of Belarusians who peacefully protested in defence of their right to freedom, democracy and dignity;
7. Strongly condemns and demands an immediate end to the violence and repression by state authorities in Belarus, and in particular the unlawful detention, the torture and the ill-treatment in detention, and the criminal prosecution of peaceful citizens and expresses its support and solidarity with Belarusian society; condemns the regime's systematic repression against civilians, which since the August 2020 stolen elections has forced more than 14 000 Belarusians to flee the country, through violence, intimidation and other forms of coercion; reiterates that this ongoing campaign of repression and the forced displacement of civilians amounts to grave violations of human rights; deplores the fact that Belarus is currently the only country in Europe where the death penalty is still enforced and insists on the need for its immediate and permanent abolition; condemns the recent measures taken by the Belarusian authorities that banned most Belarusian citizens from leaving the country, including many foreign residency permit holders;
8. Condemns the harsh and unjust court sentences recently given out to numerous political prisoners and detainees, including opposition leader Pavel Seviarynets, and the trials against democratic Belarus opposition figures such as Viktor Babaryka, Mikola Statkevich and Siarhei Tsikhanouski; deplores the sentencing of Pavel Sevyarynets, Yauhen Afanahel, Andrei Voynich, Pavel Yukhnevich, Dzmitry Kazlou, Maksim Viniarski and Iryna Shchasnaya in a closed trial in the city of Mahiliou;
9. Reiterates the importance of the independent Belarusian media and journalists and the important role they play in Belarusian society; condemns the suppression of the media and access to the internet, as well as the beating, arrest and intimidation of journalists and bloggers; underscores the right of the people of Belarus to have unhindered access to information;

10. Condemns the repression and hostile actions carried out by the authorities against representatives of the Polish minority and against the Polish school system in Belarus; calls, in this respect, for the unconditional release of Andželika Borys, Andrzej Poczobut and other political prisoners;
11. Calls on the European External Action Service (EEAS), the Commission and the Member States' national diplomatic representations in Belarus to closely monitor the situation and trials of individual political prisoners in Belarus, including those of Raman Pratasevich and Sofia Sapega, to offer them support and to work to secure their release; in this regard, calls on the Lukashenka regime to put an immediate end to any actions tending to intimidate or harass the members of national and European diplomatic services, in line with Belarus's international obligations under the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic and Consular Relations;
12. Underlines the urgent need to maintain and expand contacts and cooperation with representatives of Belarusian democratic forces in Minsk and in exile, and in particular with Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya and members of the Coordination Council and National Anti-Crisis Management; therefore, joins the calls to invite their representatives on the occasion of the G7 summit of 11-13 June 2021 and the Eastern Partnership summit in 2021 and recommends continuing to invite them to high-level bilateral meetings at governmental level, as well as to parliamentary sessions and interparliamentary meetings, and to create groups dedicated to Belarus in all national parliaments of the EU Member States;
13. Calls on the Council to extend as soon as possible the lists of persons and entities under EU sanctions by including individuals and entities involved in the interception and forced landing of Ryanair flight FR4978 and the detention of Raman Pratasevich and Sofia Sapega; recalls that the journalist Raman Pratasevich is at risk of facing the death penalty;
14. Urges the Council to proceed with utmost urgency with the fourth package of sanctions against individuals and entities who took part in or were complicit in the electoral fraud, repression, torture or the ill-treatment and human rights violations in Belarus, including the persecution of independent journalists and bloggers, and to begin work on a subsequent package; calls for the sanctioning of a substantially larger number of Belarusian officials, such as prosecutors, judges and law-enforcement employees who play a role in the repression and wrongful conviction of regime critics, as well as police, prison service staff, members of parliament and government and the agents working for the regime in the areas of propaganda, media, disinformation and hate-speech, of individuals and entities who support Lukashenka and his regime, such as Marat Markov, who interviewed Raman Pratasevich on the state channel ONT on 2 June, and of those who participated in the incident of 23 May, such as intelligence officers and aviation authorities; recalls, in this regard, the need to take full advantage of the options for restrictive measures under the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime (EU Magnitsky Act);
15. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to strictly deny any financial support to the Belarusian regime and therefore to refuse any new credit lines to Belarusian banks and to halt any investments into infrastructure projects or economic undertakings in Belarus; calls on the Commission to adopt measures to prevent European financial institutions from acquiring bonds or any other financial instrument issued by the Belarusian Government and affiliated public institutions; welcomes the fact that the European

Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development have suspended financing of projects in the Belarusian public sector and calls for an investigation into how the unused funds can be reoriented towards civil society and the private sector where it is not related to the regime; calls on the International Monetary Fund and the EU Member States not to provide direct budgetary support to the regime under any circumstances, and to refrain from using the special drawing process announced for 2021;

16. Reminds all EU businesses operating in Belarus of its previous call to exercise particular diligence and uphold their responsibility to respect human rights, in accordance with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: in addition, asks them to refrain from any new investment and to also publicly protest against the Belarusian authorities' ongoing repression in the country;
17. Calls on the Council to swiftly adopt and implement economic sanctions, which must be substantial and have, as much as possible, an immediate effect on the Belarusian regime, its supporters and the economic actors that support the regime; calls for these economic sanctions to target public and private companies controlled by the regime or closely entangled with the regime's business interests or known for dismissing their employees for participating in strikes or protests; calls for sectoral sanctions to target in particular the crude oil and oil-products, potash, steel and wood-processing industries; furthermore calls for the termination of cooperation and financing for Belarusian state-owned banks and for limiting credit lines from international banks for subsidiary banks in Belarus and for consideration to be given to temporarily suspending Belarus from the SWIFT system; asks for EU-registered companies, particularly Siemens AG, to stop collaborating with the Belarusian authorities through sharing technology and know-how; calls on the Member States and the EU institutions to increase their efforts to tackle the substantial cigarette smuggling from Belarus into the EU, which provides funds to the Lukashenka regime; encourages a coordinated EU action of solidarity to offset the economic hardships for the Member States most affected by the economic sanctions on Belarus;
18. Welcomes the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) decision to suspend the Belarusian broadcaster BTRC's EBU membership; calls for the suspension of Belarus from international sport bodies and international sports events, including European and world championships and the Olympic Games in Tokyo; urges the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) to remove broadcasting rights for the EURO 2020 football tournament from Belarusian state television TVR and assign them to the independent Belsat TV free of charge;
19. Calls on the Member States to improve their cooperation on intelligence matters regarding the crisis in Belarus and to expel known and suspected Belarusian intelligence officers active across the Union; encourages its President to restrict access to the European Parliament for the staff of the Embassy of Belarus in Brussels, including physical and remote access to meetings hosted by the European Parliament, and to review Parliament's communication with the Embassy of Belarus;
20. Is deeply concerned about Russia's involvement with Lukashenka's regime, including financial support and close cooperation between intelligence services;
21. Emphasises the need for international engagement, including discussions at the UN and NATO; calls for the EU to closely coordinate its measures with the United States, the G7

partners and other like-minded countries and to seek broad alignment by the EU's partners, in particular by European neighbours such as Ukraine, in order to achieve the highest possible impact of the sanctions; recalls the Ukrainian Government's decision to join EU Member States in imposing transport sanctions on Belarusian airlines, and calls on the Commission and the Council to impose punitive measures on Belavia and its passengers flying to Russian-annexed Crimea; welcomes the upcoming EU-US and US-Russia summits and considers them important opportunities to coordinate positions between the EU and its partners;

22. Stresses that although the EU's best chances to properly deal with unlawful states is through sanctions-mechanisms, the EU, in addition to sanctions on Belarusian state-owned enterprises, should utilise existing internal pressures in Belarus by supporting Belarusian civil society;
23. Calls on the Commission and the VP/HR, together with international partners, to initiate the organisation of a high-level 'Future of Democratic Belarus' international conference on the resolution of the crisis in Belarus, and the investigation and prosecution of crimes by the Belarusian authorities against the people of Belarus and the democratic transformation of Belarus; considers that such a conference, led by the EU and attended by international financial institutions, G7 countries, EU Member States and institutions and others willing to pledge a multi-billion euro financial package, will serve to support the future reform efforts and restructuring of the economy and will send a strong signal of support to the Belarusian people;
24. Recalls its previous initiative for a high-level mission, involving former high-ranking European officials, to explore every possible avenue to stop the violence and free political prisoners and which could help create a conducive environment for an inclusive domestic political dialogue in Belarus;
25. Urges the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States to increase direct support to and engagement with the Belarusian opposition, civil society, human rights defenders and independent media, in Belarus and abroad, including through capacity-building and financial support, and increase support to the European Endowment for Democracy in its activities on the ground; calls, in this regard, for the EU and other international organisations to provide financial and technical support to media outlets and independent journalists in order to enable them to carry out their duties of informing society about the ongoing developments in Belarus; reiterates, in this regard, its call for increased assistance for the Belsat TV channel;
26. Commits to help strengthening the capacity of the democratic forces, enhancing the role of civil society, supporting the fully fledged political dialogue leading to a peaceful transition of power in Belarus, as well as young political leaders and human rights defenders, through Parliament's democracy support mechanisms;
27. Welcomes the outline for a EUR 3 billion comprehensive plan of economic support to a future democratic Belarus presented by the Commission; calls on the Commission and the Council to further develop and promote this plan and communicate clearly that once democratic change happens in Belarus, the EU will be ready to provide tangible assistance to put the country on a path of reform and modernisation; notes that the EU needs to propose a comprehensive set of actions to prepare the democratic forces of Belarus for the implementation of this package;



28. Calls for the EU to coordinate with the United States, the G7 partners and other like-minded countries to freeze cooperation with Lukashenka's public sector and reorient the cooperation with Belarusian civil society and Belarusian private companies outside the scope of the regime;
29. Rejects the unacceptable threats of Aliaksandr Lukashenka that the Belarusian authorities will not stop irregular migrants and drug trafficking and expresses its concern regarding the increase in irregular migration from Belarus into the EU and about the potential involvement of Belarusian authorities in this phenomenon; calls for the Member States and EU institutions to follow developments in these areas and take the appropriate measures;
30. Condemns the misuse by the Belarusian leadership of law-enforcement authorities for political purposes; calls on Interpol to immediately and thoroughly review current and future requests made by Belarus and to take all appropriate measures to prevent Belarus from misusing Interpol for political purposes;
31. Underlines the need for a comprehensive investigation into the crimes committed by the Lukashenka regime against the people of Belarus, which should be concluded with the setting-up of an international tribunal to prosecute those crimes; urges that, in the absence of Belarusian authorities' willingness to establish rule of law and accountability, the international community must take action to help secure evidence of crimes and ensure investigation and prosecution of those responsible throughout the full chain of command; welcomes the initiatives by several EU Member States to apply the universal jurisdiction principle and prepare court cases against Belarusian perpetrators of repression and encourages all other Member States to follow their example; calls for active support for all international initiatives that seek to address the impunity in Belarus, such as the International Platform Against Impunity and the Justice Hub in Vilnius;
32. Urges the VP/HR, the Commission, the Council and the Member States to continue raising the situation in Belarus in all relevant European and international organisations such as the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the UN Human Rights Council and other UN specialised bodies, with the aim of securing urgent international action on the situation in Belarus and overcoming the obstruction of Russia and other countries to such action;
33. Encourages the Member States to further facilitate the procedures for obtaining visas and residence for those fleeing Belarus for political reasons or for those who require medical treatment as a result of violence perpetrated against them, and to offer them and their families the necessary support and assistance; calls on the Member States to implement the recommendations of the OSCE Moscow Mechanism rapporteur in relation to granting asylum in cases of persecution covered under the Geneva Refugee Convention and to further facilitate the procedure for the issuance of emergency visas and provision of temporary shelter in EU countries; calls on the Member States and the Commission to offer scholarships to Belarusian students and scholars expelled from universities and imprisoned for their pro-democratic stance; calls on the Member States to provide financial support to those exiled institutions, such as the European Humanities University in Vilnius, that are nurturing a new generation of Belarusians who are challenging the country's corrupt and illegitimate system;
34. Calls on the Commission, the Member States and the EEAS to cooperate with international partners, such as the OSCE Moscow Mechanism and the UN Human Rights

Council, as well as human rights defenders and civil society on the ground, to ensure the monitoring, documentation and reporting of human rights violations and subsequent accountability and justice for victims; welcomes the establishment of the International Accountability Platform for Belarus and calls for the EU institutions and Member States to support its functioning; commits to the effective functioning of the European Parliament's Platform on the fight against impunity in Belarus and to coordinating a timely international reaction to developments in Belarus;

35. Reiterates the need for all Member States to take a unified position in responding to the state terrorism orchestrated by the regime of Aliaksandr Lukashenka and supported by the Kremlin; underlines the importance for the EU of countering disinformation on the situation in Belarus within the EU, as well as other forms of hybrid threats undertaken by third parties in this regard; expresses solidarity with Latvia following the unjustified expulsion of its diplomats by Belarus; condemns the launch of a criminal investigation by the Belarusian Prosecutor General against the Foreign Minister of Latvia, as well as the Mayor of the capital city Riga; condemns all attempts by the Belarusian authorities to exert pressure on EU Member States, including the Belarusian prosecutors' request to question Lithuania's former president Valdas Adamkus, based on his alleged connections with an SS-subordinated auxiliary police battalion that carried out punitive operations in Belarus during World War Two;
36. Reiterates its concern about the commercial operation of the Astravyets nuclear power plant just 45 km away from Vilnius and underlines the risks it carries for EU countries; stresses the importance of addressing the nuclear safety threats posed by the Astravyets nuclear power plant, regrets that Belarus is not engaging on the nuclear safety of the Astravyets plant in complete transparency and has not committed to full implementation of the recommendations of the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group (ENSREG) peer review of the plant, and calls for the introduction of effective safeguards against the direct or indirect sale of Belarusian electricity produced by the Astravyets plant to EU markets;
37. Underlines that the current situation is a test of the credibility of the European Union and the effectiveness of its foreign policymaking; recalls that the situation in Belarus, a neighbouring country and member of the Eastern Partnership, has a direct impact on the EU and that the EU should show sufficient determination to offer tangible and long-term support to democratic forces that strive to bring freedom and democracy to Belarus; calls for the EU not to hesitate, by acting swiftly and proactively;
38. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the International Civil Aviation Organization, and the authorities of the Republic of Belarus.