



Беларуская нацыянальная платформа
Форум грамадзянскай супольнасці
УСХОДНЯГА ПАРТНЁРСТВА

12.11.2014

Appeal of the Belarusian National Platform Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership to the international community

"On the support of human rights activist Elena Tonkacheva"

EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Head of EU Delegation to Belarus

Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the EU countries

Diplomatic missions of EU and the United States in the Republic of Belarus

UN Representation in Belarus

Secretary General of the Council of Europe

OSCE Secretary General

We, the participants of the Belarusian National Platform for the Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership, expresses our deep indignation and fundamental disagreement about the cancellation of the residence permit in the Republic of Belarus and decision of the Belarusian authorities of November 5, 2014 of expulsion out of the country for 3 years within one-month time well-known human rights activist, chairman of the educational institution "Center for Legal Transformation" Elena Tonkacheva.

Elena Tonkacheva, a citizen of the Russian Federation, since 1985 lives in Belarus, where she graduated from school, got a law degree, has a permanent place of residence and work, family and property. We know Elena Tonkacheva as one of the most well-known and respected civil society actors, professional, leader of the human rights organization. For 20 years, she and her organization provide professional legal support and expertise to many non-profit organizations of Belarus, as well as people in situations of human rights violations.

The formal reason for the revocation of the residence permit and expulsion are violations of traffic rules by the car belonging to Elena Tonkacheva recorded by road video-camera (minor speeding).

We recognize the decision taken by the authorities as politically motivated and totally disproportionate sanction compared to the danger of the offense. For us, it is evident that the real basis of the expulsion is civic and political position and active human rights and advocacy activity of Elena Tonkacheva. Belarusian authorities use their existing formal occasion for preventive punishment of unwanted civic activists, where human rights defenders belong to specific group of risk.

Decision-making bodies of the Republic of Belarus considered it possible to ignore and refused to treat more than 7,000 signatures collected within three days for support of petition of citizens of Belarus to abolish procedure of expulsion Elena Tonkacheva and restoring her residence.

We regard the decision of the Belarusian authorities concerning Elena Tonkacheva as one more act of repression against civil society actors of our country, which in its meaning continues odious logic of political persecution and the existence of political prisoners in our country.

Recently, the issue of human rights and the existence of political prisoners in Belarus, for the reasons unknown to us, is not anymore a priority item on the agenda of the EU and the international community in its relations with the Republic of Belarus. We call on the EU delegation to the Republic of Belarus, the EU diplomatic missions and the US, the UN Office in Belarus, other international organizations and bodies to demonstrate the principles and insistence on democratic values, human rights and freedoms, to express their attitude about the decision taken by the representatives of the Belarusian authorities, to support Elena Tonkacheva and stop the expulsion of the human rights activist from Belarus.

Signatures:

Belarusian civil society organizations, members of the Belarusian National Platform for the Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership (over 60 civil society organizations and initiatives)