



Беларуская нацыянальная платформа

Форум грамадзянскай супольнасці  
УСХОДНЯГА ПАРТНЁРСТВА

**European External Action Service (EEAS)**

**Delegation of the EU to the Republic of Belarus**

**European Commissioner for European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement**

March 27, 2017

## **Statement of the Coordinating Committee of the Belarusian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum**

### **In connection with the events of March 25-26, 2017 in Minsk and other Belarusian cities**

In previous weeks and especially in recent days, we all witnessed repressive measures against citizens - participants in peaceful demonstrations. Particular attention is drawn to the absolutely unprecedented number of arrests of citizens exercising their constitutional rights to freedom of expression, speech and peaceful assembly on March 25, 2017 in Minsk, as well as in other cities of the country. Special indignation in this regard is caused by the massive use of violence and repressive measures on the part of officials and law enforcement agencies of the Republic of Belarus against persons participating in peaceful protests.

Separately, we should note the inadequacy and bias of information about planned and held peaceful protest actions in the state media, which artificially and maliciously draws the image of the enemy and uses the language of hostility.

It is also impossible to ignore and condemn the detention of Belarusian and international human rights defenders in the course of the execution and attempt to monitor the events, in particular the detention in the office of the Human Rights Center "Viasna", detention of members of the Belarusian Helsinki Committee, etc. Once again during the events of March 25 and 26, 2017 there were detentions of journalists in the performance of professional duties.

These actions of the authorities do not correspond to the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus, current legislation, international obligations of the country, trample on the values of democracy and human rights.

**The Coordinating Committee of the Belarusian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum believes that in the current conditions, the interaction between the Republic of Belarus and the European Union can not continue in the previous regime. We call on the responsible EU officials to**

**objectively assess the current situation and consider the opportunities, as well as the conditions and limitations for the development of the EU-Belarus dialogue.**

We propose to postpone the EU-Belarus Coordination Group meeting scheduled for April 3-4, 2017 in Minsk until the release and removal of charges from all detainees in connection with peaceful protest actions held in Belarus in February-March 2017 as well as objective, fair and law-based investigation on the facts of arbitrary detention, harsh treatment of protesters and bringing those responsible to justice.

We also consider it necessary to revise the format of the Dialogue on Human Rights between the Republic of Belarus and the European Union by including in the dialogue agenda specific commitments of the Belarusian state on the respect to the rights and freedoms of citizens.

We call on the European Union to take appropriate steps that could contribute to a real and broad dialogue between the authorities and society. For our part, we offer the Belarusian National Platform of the EaP Civil Society Forum as one of the possible platforms for such a dialogue.

*Coordination Committee of the BNP EaP CSF*