

Demonstrations in Belarus

Chronology of a revolution in progress

June 3rd

The sixth set of sanctions against Russia excludes the "Belarusian Bank for Development and Reconstruction" from the SWIFT system for supporting the Russian regime. The list of Belarusian entities subject to restrictions has been extended to 32 new entities, including producers of dual-use goods and technologies, tobacco, potash, and the state television and radio company Belteleradio. An additional 12 individuals responsible for the repression of civil society and democratic opposition are also subject to sanctions, including an asset freeze and a travel ban.

May 19th

In a [resolution](#), Parliament condemned Belarus' support for Russia and called for all sanctions against Russia to be extended to Belarus. In addition, MEPs called on the authorities in Minsk to abolish the death penalty and asked Member States to apply the principle of universal jurisdiction and "prepare judicial proceedings" against Belarusian officials responsible for violence and repression against the population, trade unions and the political opposition.

April 8th

The Union [prohibited](#) Belarusian road transport companies from operating in the Union. Exemptions were granted for transport for humanitarian purposes and for food, agricultural and pharmaceutical products. It also forbade the sale of banknotes denominated in any official currency of the EU Member States to Belarus or to any person, entity or body in Belarus.

April 7th

The European Parliament [called](#) for the sanctions against Belarus to match those introduced against Russia. It also called for the seizure of assets belonging to persons linked to the Belarusian regime and for a ban on road freight from and to Belarus.

March 28th

The Commission [called](#) on Member States to make assessments in order to withdraw or refuse the renewal of citizenship to Belarusian nationals subject to EU sanctions.

March 17th

The Council of Europe [suspended](#) its relations with Belarus because of its involvement in the Russian invasion of Ukraine. As a non-signatory state to the European Convention on Human Rights, Belarus is not a full member of the Council of Europe. Nevertheless, the Committee of Ministers deprived Minsk of any form of co-operation under the conventions signed by the country as well as under the four partial agreements of which the country was a member.

March 9th

The EU [extended](#) its sanctions against Belarus by blocking transactions with the central bank and state-owned enterprises, as well as access to the SWIFT financial messaging system for 3 banks and their subsidiaries. It has also limited money deposits on its territory and prohibited the supply of euro banknotes to Belarus.

March 4th

The Commission [suspended](#) cooperation with Russia and Belarus under the European Neighborhood Instrument and the Interreg Baltic Sea Region program. For Belarus, the EU contribution had amounted to €257 million.

March 2nd

The EU [adopted](#) new sanctions against Belarus, including measures against 22 senior officials involved in the aggression against Ukraine and restrictions on trade in equipment for the production of potash, timber, steel, tobacco and hydrocarbon products.

Exiled opponent Svetlana Tikhanovskaïa [launched](#) an opposition movement against the war and called on Belarusians to mobilize.

March 1st

In a [resolution](#) condemning the invasion of Ukraine, the European Parliament called for the strengthening of sanctions against Russia and for these measures to be extended to Belarus, in particular the exclusion of the SWIFT financial messaging system. It also called for the establishment of an anti-corruption instrument and targeted sanctions against those responsible for high-level corruption in Russia and Belarus.

February 27th

The President of the Commission [announced](#) that the Union would extend to Belarus the export restrictions on dual-use goods decided on the 25th against Russia. She added that the Union would also sanction Belarusians who contributed to the Russian war effort.

Exiled opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaïa [launched](#) a civil disobedience movement to protest against the regime's participation in the war against Ukraine. [Demonstrations](#) were being held across the country, the first in many months.

February 26th

In a telephone conversation, French President Emmanuel Macron [asked](#) Alexander Lukashenko "to demand the withdrawal of Russian troops from Belarusian soil as quickly as possible". On the eve of a referendum to approve a constitutional reform providing for the end of the nuclear neutrality status of Belarus, E. Macron denounced "the seriousness of a decision which would authorize Russia to deploy nuclear weapons on Belarusian soil".

February 25th

The European Council "strongly" [condemned](#) Belarus' involvement in the Russian attack on Ukraine, partly carried out from its territory, and asks it to "refrain from such action and to abide by its international obligations". It called for a new package of sanctions to be prepared against Russia to cover Belarus as well.

February 24th

On a visit to Paris, opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaïa [announced](#) the forthcoming formation of a government in exile. She declared: "I am taking the responsibility to represent the Republic of Belarus and its people, to stand up for the independence and national interest of my country".

February 22nd

The Venice Commission, the Council of Europe's advisory body on constitutional issues, [stated](#) that the constitutional reform to be put to a referendum on 27 February would aggravate the "strong imbalance of powers" that already exists in Belarus. It also criticised the lack of transparency of the reform and the "obvious absence of meaningful cooperation" with the opposition in exile and civil society.

February 21st

After a meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council, EU High Representative Josep Borrell [warned](#) that new sanctions could be imposed on Belarus if a Russian attack on Ukraine started from its territory. He stressed that "Belarus is being dragged into the crisis", was engaged in a "process of satellisation with respect to Russia" and could lose its nuclear neutrality.

February 9th

On the occasion of the Day of Solidarity with Belarus, the EU [reiterated](#) its support for a "safe, sovereign, democratic and prosperous future" for the country. It reiterated its call for an end to the repression and the release of the more than 1040 political prisoners recorded to date. It reaffirmed its commitment to "secure justice for victims and accountability for perpetrators".

The President of the European Parliament Roberta Metsola [recalled](#) that "Belarus must be free", and reaffirmed the Union's commitment to "all those standing up

for democracy and the more than 1,000 political prisoners deprived of their freedom".

February 1st

In a [letter](#) to the Presidents of the European Parliament, Commission and Council, 77 MEPs from the EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA and ECR groups [expressed concern](#) about the presence of Russian troops in Belarus. They stated that this deployment could be part of a plan to "subjugate and occupy Belarus". They demanded that any diplomatic decisions that might be taken to prevent an attack on Ukraine "must envisage independent and democratic future for Belarus, not at its expense".

January 27th

The Union [noted](#) that there were now more than 1,000 political prisoners counted in Belarus, a fact it called a "shameful development. It reiterated its call for their immediate release and reminded the country of its commitments and obligations as a member of the UN and the OSCE.

January 17th

The French National Assembly adopted a [resolution](#) "solemnly condemning the illegitimate regime of Alexander Lukashenko". MEPs condemned the acts of torture and systematic repression perpetrated by the regime, as well as the hijacking of a Ryanair plane in May 2021 to arrest journalist Roman Protassevitch and his girlfriend. They also denounced the use of migrants as a weapon of destabilisation. They demanded the release of political prisoners and the organisation of free elections.

January 12th

The Union [announced](#) that the candidate countries Northern Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania, as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, will apply the sanctions decided on November 15th against airlines and travel agencies that enable the transport of people to Belarus.

The Lithuanian government [terminated](#) the contract between its national railway company and the Belarusian company Belaruskali, which is subject to U.S. sanctions. It believed that the contract, which involved the transportation of potash, a product subject to a partial European and American embargo, was contrary to national security.

2021

December 17th

The Charlemagne Prize, which honors personalities for their European commitment, is [awarded](#) to Belarusian opposition figures Svetlana Tikhanovskaïa, exiled in Lithuania, Maria Kalesnikova, currently imprisoned, and Veronika Tsepkalo, exiled in Poland. The award ceremony will take place on May 26th 2022.

December 16th

The European Council "[reiterates](#) its call for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners and for an end to the repression of civil society and independent media. It reiterates the democratic right of the Belarusian people to elect their president through new, free and fair elections".

It "strongly condemns the instrumentalisation of migrants and refugees by the Belarusian regime and the humanitarian crisis it has created". It called for the necessary measures to be taken to address this situation, and to "promptly implement restrictive measures, following the adoption of the fifth package of listings, and be prepared to adopt further measures as necessary".

December 15th

The Eastern Partnership summit [was held](#) in Brussels without Belarus, which had suspended its participation in June. The EU "regrets" this withdrawal and "looks forward to resuming cooperation with the Belarusian authorities as soon as necessary conditions for peaceful democratic transition are in place". It recalled that it continued to engage with and support Belarusian citizens, civil society and

independent media, in particular through a €3 billion plan, available as soon as Belarus becomes democratic.

December 14th

Sergei Tikhanovsky, who had tried to run in the August 2020 presidential election, was [sentenced](#) to 18 years in prison for "organising mass disorder", "inciting social hatred", "disturbing social order" and "impeding the activities of the Central Electoral Commission". It was after his arrest in 2020 that his wife Svetlana Tikhanovskaya stood for the presidential election, the result of which was falsified by the regime. Four other opponents were also sentenced to between 14 and 18 years in prison.

In a statement, the Union [condemned](#) a new episode in the "brutal and systematic repression of all independent voices in Belarus". It called for the release of 920 political prisoners and warned that further sanctions may be imposed.

December 12th

Commission President Ursula von der Leyen [received](#) opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaïa. She [announced](#) additional EU support of €30 million for Belarusian youth, independent media, SMEs in exile and cultural actors.

The President of the European Council, Charles Michel, the High Representative, Josep Borrell, and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs [met](#) with representatives of Belarusian civil society. J. Borrell reiterated that the Union condemned the regime's human rights violations, called for an end to repression and the release of political prisoners, and would support a political dialogue to end the crisis.

December 2nd

The EU [adopted](#) new sanctions against 17 individuals and 11 entities involved in inciting and organising illegal EU border crossings. The sanctions target members of the judiciary, propaganda bodies, as well as politicians and companies such as the airline Belavia, tour operators and hotels. This is the fifth package of sanctions since the beginning of the crisis. 183 individuals and 26 entities are now subject to an asset freeze and an EU travel ban.

These sanctions were adopted in consultation with the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. The EU and its partners [reiterated](#) their call for an end to the

repression and the release of 900 political prisoners, and called on the regime to engage in dialogue with the democratic opposition and civil society.

December 1st

The Commission [proposed](#) temporary measures to help Latvia, Lithuania and Poland cope with the influx of migrants at their borders with Belarus. The three Member States will be able to extend the period for registering asylum applications to 4 weeks, and up to 16 weeks for processing applications at the border. Return procedures will be simplified. These exceptional measures concern non-EU nationals who have entered the EU illegally through Belarus. They will apply for a period of 6 months after adoption by the Council and the Parliament.

November 24th

Opposition politician Svetlana Tsikhanovskaya [spoke](#) at the European Parliament in Strasbourg. She said that sanctions against the Belarusian regime "do work" and called on the EU to "continue holding a consistent sanctions policy".

November 23rd

The Commission [proposed](#) a series of measures against the activities of transport operators who engage in or facilitate the smuggling of migrants or trafficking in human beings into the EU. These measures include limiting operations on the EU market, suspending licenses and banning transit through or over the EU territory.

The Commission announced that it was making €200 million available to Latvia, Lithuania and Poland for border management, and €36.7 million to Lithuania to improve the implementation of asylum procedures and reception conditions. It also announced that it had allocated €700,000 in humanitarian aid for vulnerable people and migrants stranded in Belarus and would release €3.5 million for voluntary returns from Belarus to countries of origin.

November 22nd

An international conference on Belarus was [organised](#) in Vienna by the Austrian government to "find, together with civil society, ways out of the current crisis in Belarus". Opposition activist Svetlana Tsikhanovskaya, who took part, [considered](#)

this a "first step towards real change in the country", but called for concrete decisions.

November 18th

In a joint [declaration](#), the G7 Foreign Ministers and the EU High Representative condemned the Belarusian regime for "orchestrating irregular migration across its borders". They called on it to "immediately cease its aggressive campaign" and allow international organisations to provide humanitarian assistance to people stranded on its territory.

They assured that they would continue to work together to hold regime officials accountable and to support civil society and human rights in Belarus.

The Belarusian regime [declared](#) that the migrant settlements on the Polish border were being evacuated.

November 16th

At the Bruzgi-Kuznica border crossing, migrants threw stones at Polish forces, who [responded](#) with tear gas and water cannons. Poland said it was [facing](#) an "unprecedented attack" orchestrated by the Belarusian regime.

November 15th

The Council [adapted](#) its sanctions regime to target persons and entities involved in the smuggling of migrants into the EU. The measures will [apply](#), among others, to airlines and travel agencies that allow the transport of persons to Belarus.

November 12th

Commission Vice-President Margaritis Schinas [welcomed](#) the decision of the Turkish authorities to ban Syrians, Iraqis and Yemenis from flying to Belarus. After meetings in the United Arab Emirates and Lebanon, he [assured](#) that these two countries will cooperate to stop the smuggling of migrants to the EU via Belarus.

Slovenian Interior Minister Ales Hojs, whose country holds the EU Council Presidency, [expressed](#) support for Poland and announced an extraordinary meeting of interior ministers "in the shortest possible time".

The North Atlantic Council, NATO's political body, "strongly" [condemned](#) the Belarusian hybrid attack and said its members "will continue to monitor the implications for the security of the Alliance".

November 11th

The EU Member States currently in the UN Security Council - Estonia, France, Ireland - issued a joint [statement](#) with the US, UK, Norway, and also Albania, which is about to attend. They considered the tactics of the Belarusian regime to be unacceptable and called for a strong international reaction, and for international cooperation to hold the regime to account.

November 10th

The European Union [denounced](#) the "the cynicism of the Belarusian regime that, by stirring up the crisis at the EU's external borders, is trying to distract attention from the situation in the country, where brutal repression and human rights violations are continuing and even worsening". It "strongly condemns the Lukashenko regime for deliberately putting people's lives and wellbeing in danger".

It assured that it was working closely with countries of origin and transit to stop the smuggling of migrants to Europe organised by Belarus, and warned that it would take further sanctions against those involved in and contributing to this trafficking.

Visiting Warsaw, the President of the European Council Charles Michel [condemned](#) the "disgraceful, brutal and violent hybrid" attack carried out by Belarus, and expressed the Union's solidarity with Poland. He considers that the situation requires "strong and urgent" measures and specified that the Union and the Member States were considering "utilise our capacity for action in the coming hours and days in order to make a significant impact".

Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki [said](#) his country expected diplomatic support from member states, in particular through new sanctions against Belarus and measures to block migrant flights to Minsk.

MEPs [debated](#) the situation on the Polish border and expressed their "deep worries". They condemned the Belarusian regime's tactics "of funnelling migrant flows to the EU's external borders, escalating the situation with neighbouring countries, in particular Poland, as revenge for European Union sanctions".

November 9th

The Council partially [suspended](#) the EU-Belarus visa facilitation agreement in order to exclude the Belarusian regime's leaders from it. The decision was a response to the regime's organisation of the influx of migrants at the EU border, which the EU considered a hybrid attack. The Council specifies that this decision will not affect ordinary Belarusian citizens.

The Lithuanian Parliament [declared](#) a state of emergency on the border with Belarus for one month from November 10th. Access to a 5-kilometre zone along the border [will be restricted](#), and controls tightened.

November 8th

Several hundred migrants [were taken](#) to the Polish border, visibly accompanied by armed Belarusians, and were blocked by the Polish army.

Polish President Andrzej Duda [held](#) a Security Council meeting and announced that he would take action if the situation required it and would be in contact with other EU and NATO members.

The President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen [called](#) the situation a hybrid attack and demanded that Belarus stop "putting people's lives at risk". She warned the Belarusian authorities that "through a cynical instrumentalisation of migrants will not help them succeed in their purposes". She called on member states to approve new sanctions against the Belarusian regime.

European Parliament President David Sassoli [called](#) on Belarus to stop "exploiting migrants and asylum seekers for political power games". He also called on Poland to accept the EU's help and "prevent escalation".

November 4th

35 States, including those of the European Union except Poland, [triggered](#) the so-called "Vienna mechanism" at the OSCE, which allows a State to be asked to provide answers on the human rights situation. They asked Belarus to explain itself on the repression of peaceful demonstrations and civil society, torture and degrading treatment, as well as the trafficking of migrants to the Union.

In a [statement](#), the Union reiterated its condemnation of the actions of the Belarusian regime, its demand for the release of political prisoners and its support for the democratic opposition and for a dialogue to organise a peaceful transition.

The Union [described](#) the [sentencing](#) of Leonid Sudalenko & Tatyana Lasitsa, members of a human rights organisation, to 3 and 2.5 years in prison respectively, as "unjustified".

November 2nd

Polish President Andrzej Duda signed the [law](#) to build a [200-kilometre-long fence](#) on the border with Belarus to prevent the passage of migrants brought by the Belarusian regime.

October 25th

At a meeting of the UN 3rd Committee, a body in charge of social, humanitarian and cultural issues, the European Union and its Member States signed a joint [communiqué](#) with other countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan and Ukraine.

They condemn "the recent escalation of violations of human rights law" in Belarus, and call for an end to the repression and the immediate release of those arbitrarily detained. They reiterate their support for the work of the International Accountability Platform for Belarus to bring those responsible for the regime to international justice.

October 22nd

The European Council [reaffirmed](#) that the Union "will continue countering the ongoing hybrid attack launched by the Belarusian regime, including by adopting further restrictive measures against persons and legal entities, in line with its gradual approach, as a matter of urgency."

It also repeated its “call on the Belarusian authorities to release all political prisoners”.

October 18th

During their meeting in Luxembourg, EU foreign ministers warned Belarus against the "political use" of migrants. They stressed that the EU will continue its contacts with countries of origin and transit to put an end to the journeys of migrants organised by the Belarusian regime.

EU High Representative Josep Borrell told journalists that the EU was ready to sanction the airline Belavia, which transports migrants to Belarus, and wanted to convince other airlines not to take part in this "instrumentalisation of migrants".

October 17th

The French ambassador to Belarus, expelled by the regime, left the country. Appointed at the end of 2020, he had not presented his credentials to Alexander Lukashenko, as France and the EU no longer recognise him as president after the rigged election in August 2020.

October 14th

The lower house of the Polish parliament approved plans to build a barrier with surveillance equipment on the border with Belarus, in response to the influx of migrants organised by the Belarusian regime. The project must now be examined by the Senate.

October 7th

In a resolution adopted by 506 votes to 29, the European Parliament called for the regime of Alexander Lukashenko to be brought before the International Court of Justice, building on the work of the Platform against Impunity in Belarus set up by Parliament in March 2021.

MEPs reiterated their condemnation of the "repression, torture and ill-treatment of the peaceful people" in Belarus, as well as the "instrumentalisation of human beings by the Lukashenko regime for political purposes".

October 5th

During a debate on Belarus in the European Parliament, High Representative Josep Borrell [condemned](#) the regime's "state-sponsored migrant smuggling" into the EU. He stressed that the EU must defend "its borders and values". He also recalled that the EU must fight against the regime's disinformation while supporting the democratic opposition.

October 1st

The Secretary General of the Council of Europe Marija Pejcinovic Buric stated to be "[very concerned](#)" after the Belarusian Supreme Court dissolved the Belarusian Helsinki Committee, one of the country's oldest human rights NGOs. She called on the authorities to "ensure that the Belarusian Helsinki Committee can continue to work safely, serenely and without hindrance".

September 30th

In a [resolution](#), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe calls on the Belarusian authorities to "stop the instrumentalisation of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers". It also proposes the creation of a permanent group or body within the Council of Europe focusing on the human rights situation in Belarus, one of whose tasks would be to monitor the situation of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

September 29th

The European Commission proposes to partially [suspend](#) the EU-Belarus visa facilitation agreement in order to exclude officials linked to the regime of Alexander Lukashenko. The measure, which needs to be validated by the Council, will concern members of official Belarusian delegations and members of the Belarusian national and regional governments and parliaments, as well as the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court, in the exercise of their functions.

September 27th

Maria Kalesnikova, a member of the Belarusian Opposition Coordination Council who is currently imprisoned, is the winner of the [Václav Havel Prize for Human Rights](#), awarded by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Her sister Tatsiana Khomich, who received the award on her behalf in Strasbourg, said: "This award is a sign of solidarity of the entire democratic world with the people of Belarus. It is also a sign to us, Belarusians, that the international community supports us, and that we are on the right track."

September 24th

Lithuania hosted a [conference](#) of the Belarusian diaspora in Vilnius, with 40 delegations from 27 countries. Delegates discussed support for Belarusians who remain in the country, economic pressure on the regime and international action by the democratic opposition.

September 15th-17th

On a visit to Paris, the opponent Svetlana Tsikhanovskaya was received by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs [Jean-Yves Le Drian](#), the President of the French Senate Gérard Larcher, the Haut-commissaire au Plan (High commissioner for strategic planning) [François Bayrou](#), the President of the Constitutional Council Laurent Fabius, and the Mayor of Paris Anne Hidalgo. In an [article](#) published by Ouest France, S. Tsikhanovskaya called on France to use its international influence to "establish a dialogue between all the actors concerned" and find a way out of the crisis.

September 9th

The Franco-German Journalism Prize in the multimedia category is [awarded](#) to the Belarusian journalist Kseniya Halubovich, for her series of reports "Belarus: chronicle of a revolution" broadcast on Arte.

September 6th

Maria Kalesnikova, a member of the Belarusian Opposition Coordination Council, was [sentenced](#) to 11 years in prison for her participation in the protest against the rigged presidential election of August 2020. Maxim Znak, a lawyer, is sentenced to 10 years in prison. In a statement, the European External Action Service described as unfounded the charges of conspiracy against the state on which these convictions are based. It [deplored](#) the regime's "blatant disrespect" for human rights.

September 2nd

Polish President Andrzej Duda [declared](#) a state of emergency in two regions bordering Belarus, Podlaskie and the Lublin region, to [deal](#) with a possible influx of migrants organised by the Minsk regime.

September 1st

At the Strategic Forum in Bled, Slovenia, opposition politician Svetlana Tikhanovskaya [met](#) with Neighbourhood Commissioner Oliver Varhelyi to discuss EU support for civil society. She also [met](#) with European Investment Bank President Werner Hoyer to discuss possible EIB support for the private sector in Belarus, and with the President of the Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Odile Renaud-Basso, to [discuss](#) EBRD support for a future transition.

August 31st

The Polish government [asked](#) the President to [declare a state of emergency](#) in two regions of the country bordering Belarus, in order to deal with a possible influx of migrants organised by the Belarusian regime.

Maria Kalesnikova, a member of the Belarusian Opposition Coordination Council, has been [shortlisted](#) as one of three finalists for the Vaclav Havel Human Rights Prize, awarded annually by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The winner will be announced on 27 September.

August 30th

The spokesperson of the EU High Representative [condemned](#) the closure of the Belarusian Association of Journalists on August 27th and once again calls on the regime to end the repression.

August 18th

EU interior ministers [decided](#) to support Lithuania, Latvia and Poland, which are facing an influx of migrants organised by the Belarusian regime. Additional experts and teams, as well as equipment, are planned to strengthen the reception

capacities. The European Commission is being asked to provide additional financial support.

The offices of the independent news agency BelaPAN were [searched](#) in Minsk and several journalists were arrested for "organising acts that violate public order". The agency's website was taken offline. The European External Action Service called for the immediate release of the 33 journalists imprisoned in Belarus.

The spokesperson for the EU High Representative [deplored](#) the sentencing of opposition politician Stsiapan Latypau to 8.5 years in prison, and called for the release of all 630 political prisoners.

August 9th

The President of the European Parliament David Sassoli [met](#) with opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaya in Vilnius. They [discussed](#) ways to promote democratic transition.

August 8th

On the anniversary of the rigged presidential election of August 9th 2020, High Representative Josep Borrell [recalled](#) that "the only way to end the political crisis is through an inclusive national dialogue". He specified that the European sanctions would only be lifted if the regime stopped its repression and respected democracy and human rights. He reiterated the EU's commitment to support civil society and a future democratic transition.

[Demonstrations](#) in support of the Belarusian opposition were held in Warsaw and Kiev.

August 2nd

Poland [granted](#) a humanitarian visa to athlete Krystina Tsimanouskaya, whom the Belarusian regime had tried to force back from Tokyo where the Olympic Games were taking place.

July 30th

EU High Representative Josep Borrell [described](#) the "instrumentalisation" of migrants at the Lithuanian border by the Belarusian regime as "utterly unacceptable". He assured that the Union remained determined to "effectively" manage the arrivals of migrants in order to protect the Union's external borders.

July 23rd

The Commission [announced](#) that 12 Member States have offered to send aid, including tents, beds and generators, for migrants smuggled from Belarus to Lithuania. Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson said "the authoritarian regime in Belarus is exploiting human beings for political reasons: this is completely unacceptable".

July 21st

Heidi Hautala, Vice-President of the European Parliament, and Maria Arena, Chair of the Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights, [denounced](#) the arrests of human rights defenders and civil society representatives. They call for the release of all political prisoners, and in particular of Ales Bialiatski, founder of the human rights organisation Viasna, and winner of the 2020 Sakharov Prize alongside other democratic opposition leaders.

July 16th

The Belarusian regime [continued](#) its crackdown on the media and civil society, with new raids and arrests, in particular at Radio Liberty, the in-country branch of Radio Free Europe. At the same time, 10 students and a teacher were sentenced to 2.5 years in prison, and another student to 2 years in prison, for "violating public order".

The EU representative to the OSCE [called](#) for the release of the more than 555 political prisoners currently held in Belarus, including opposition politician Viktor Babariko, sentenced to 14 years in prison on July 6th.

July 15th

EU High Representative Josep Borrell [described](#) the new wave of repression as further evidence of the "systematic and well-orchestrated campaign with the

ultimate aim to silence all remaining dissident voices and suppress civic space in Belarus". He warned that the EU is ready to take further action against the regime.

Secretary General Marija Pejcinovic Buric [expressed](#) her "concern about the searches and detentions of well-known and respected members of civil society as well as human rights defenders, including partners of the Council of Europe". She called on the Belarusian authorities to release all those arrested.

The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatovic, [considered](#) the searches and detentions of Belarusian human rights defenders unacceptable and called for the release of those arrested.

July 14th

The Belarusian regime [raided](#) the premises of several human rights organisations and arrested some of their leaders. The NGO Amnesty International [denounced](#) the fact that "civil society is being wiped out in the heart of Europe".

July 10th

Frontex [announced](#) to double the number of officers and patrol cars deployed on the Lithuanian-Belarusian border, and to dispatch experts to assist the Lithuanian authorities in gathering information on illegal border crossings.

July 9th

The Lithuanian authorities [began](#) to build a barbed wire fence along the border with Belarus to prevent the passage of illegal migrants encouraged by the Belarusian regime.

The Belarusian regime continues its [crackdown](#) on independent media by blocking Nasha Niva, the country's oldest online media, and arresting its editor-in-chief.

July 7th

Following the Belarusian regime's decision on the previous day to expel two Lithuanian diplomats, the European External Action Service [said](#) the regime was "further isolating itself" and urged it to allow all European diplomats to work normally.

July 6th

Opposition politician Viktor Babariko, arrested in June 2020 for wanting to run in the August 2020 presidential election, was sentenced to 14 years in prison for corruption. The Union [described](#) this sentence as "unfair and arbitrary", called for the immediate release of V. Babariko and all political prisoners, and stated that it is ready to consider further measures against the regime.

The President of the European Council Charles Michel [visited](#) the Lithuanian-Belarusian border with Prime Minister Ingrida Simonyte and expressed the EU's support for the arrival of irregular migrants triggered by Belarus.

Charles Michel [met](#) the opponent Svetlana Tikhanovskaya in Vilnius, to discuss among other things the future high-level conference on Belarus and ways to maintain the participation of democratic Belarus in the Eastern Partnership, from which the regime has withdrawn.

The EU candidate countries Albania, Northern Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as European Free Trade Association members Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway, [join](#) the Union's decision of 21 June to add 78 individuals and 7 entities to the EU sanctions list.

July 5th

Visiting Lithuania on State Day, European Council President Charles Michel [condemned](#) "all attempts to instrumentalise irregular and illegal migration to try to exert pressure on EU Member States". He said the EU will see if it can do more and better to help Lithuania manage the influx of migrants organised by the Belarusian regime.

Lithuania [grants](#) diplomatic status to the Vilnius-based "Belarusian democracy representation" headed by opposition politician Svetlana Tikhanovskaya.

July 2nd

Lithuania has declared a [state of emergency](#) to deal with the increase in illegal immigration from Belarus. The government explains that illegal entries have increased by a factor of 11 since 2020, with migrants presenting themselves mainly as Iraqis, Iranians or Syrians.

The President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, who is visiting the country, [supported](#) the government and denounces "political motives" behind these migrant movements, most likely organised by the Belarusian regime.

June 28th

The Belarusian government [announced](#) that it is suspending its participation in the Eastern Partnership, the EU's cooperation framework with six countries that emerged from the USSR. It also announced to withdraw its ambassador to the EU and "encouraged" the EU representative in Minsk to return to Brussels.

The President of the European Council, Charles Michel, [described](#) this decision as a step backwards that would increase tension and have a negative impact on the Belarusian people. EU High Representative Josep Borrell [assured](#) that the EU is ready to continue working with the Belarusian people.

The Czech Foreign Minister [announced](#) that the government would allow the opening of a Belarusian opposition office in Prague, as already exists in Warsaw and Vilnius.

June 24th

The EU [introduced](#) targeted economic sanctions against the Belarusian regime. These include restrictions on trade in petroleum products, potash and goods used for the production or manufacture of tobacco products. The sale and supply to Belarus of dual-use civilian and military equipment and communications surveillance equipment is also prohibited. Access to European capital markets is restricted for Belarusian entities, the European Investment Bank is suspending its programmes in the country, and the provision of insurance or reinsurance services to Belarusian entities is now prohibited.

At the European Council in Brussels, the EU Heads of State and Government "[reiterate](#)" their call for the immediate release of political prisoners and arbitrarily detained persons, "including Raman Pratasevich and Sofia Sapega", and for an end to the repression of civil society and independent media. They reaffirm the right of Belarusians to elect their president in a new, free and fair election.

June 21st

EU Foreign Ministers [decide](#) to sanction 78 individuals and 8 entities in Belarus involved in the repression in the country. 7 individuals and 1 entity are directly

linked to the hijacking of a Ryanair plane on May 23rd and the arrest of journalist Roman Protassevitch and his partner Sofia Sapega. 166 individuals and 15 entities are now subject to EU sanctions, which include an EU entry ban, an asset freeze, and a prohibition for EU individuals and companies to make funds available to them.

Prior to their meeting, the ministers [received](#) the opponent Svetlana Tikhanovskaya for a conversation on the situation in the country. S. Tikhanovskaya then travelled to Brussels where she [was received](#) by the Vice-President of the Commission for Values and Transparency, Věra Jourová.

The United Kingdom, Canada and the United States also adopted sanctions, in coordination with the EU. In a [joint statement](#), the three countries and the EU declare themselves united in their calls for an end to the repression, the release of political prisoners and the opening of a dialogue with civil society. They reiterate their support for the democratic aspirations of Belarusians and their willingness to "impose costs on the regime for its blatant disregard of international commitments".

The EU candidate countries Albania, Northern Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as EFTA members Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway, [join the EU in its decision](#) to close its airspace to Belarusian airlines and not to fly over Belarusian airspace.

June 16th

EU ambassadors [agree](#) to add 78 Belarusian officials and seven entities to the list of persons and entities subject to sanctions for their role in the crackdown on the opposition. Seven of them are involved in the hijacking of a Ryanair plane on May 23rd and the arrest of two passengers, journalist Roman Protassevich and his partner Sofia Sapega.

The sanctions will enter into force after their formal adoption by foreign ministers on June 21st.

June 14th

NATO leaders meeting in Brussels [express](#) deep concern about events in Belarus since August 2020 and stress that the regime's actions have implications for regional stability.

They call on Belarus to respect international law and human rights and to release political prisoners. They call on Russia and Belarus to act in a "predictable, transparent way".

They state that "a democratic, sovereign, and stable Belarus is in all of our interests. Allies stand ready for a mutually beneficial NATO-Belarus partnership, taking into account political and security conditions".

June 13th

The G7 leaders meeting in the UK [express](#) "deep concern at the continuing attacks on human rights, fundamental freedoms and international law" by the Belarusian authorities.

They call on the regime to engage in "meaningful" dialogue with all sectors of civil society and to hold free and fair elections. They say they will work together to hold those responsible for the repression to account and support civil society and independent media.

June 10th

In a [resolution](#) adopted by 626 votes to 16, the European Parliament describes the hijacking of a Ryanair plane on 23 May as an act of state terrorism and calls on the EU Council to extend the lists of persons and entities subject to EU sanctions to include those involved in the hijacking as soon as possible.

MEPs call for the "immediate and unconditional release" of the journalist Roman Protassevich and his companion Sofia Sapega, who were arrested as they got off the plane, and of all political prisoners.

MEPs also call for Belarus to be suspended from international sports bodies and events, including the European and World Championships and the Olympic Games in Tokyo. They call on UEFA to withdraw the broadcasting rights of the Euro football tournament from the Belarusian state television and to grant them free of charge to the independent media Belsat TV.

In an [opinion piece](#), European Commission Executive Vice-President Frans Timmermans proposes that Europeans fund psychological support structures for all Belarusian exiles who need it. He also proposes that European universities offer scholarships to Belarusian students, including through the Erasmus programme, and that European scientists and research and higher education institutes intensify their cooperation "wherever possible". He also calls on

European companies to offer jobs or internships to Belarusians and for the European media to take their Belarusian colleagues "under their wings".

June 9th

In a [speech](#) to the Czech Senate, opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaya [calls](#) for the creation of an international criminal court to try the leaders of the Belarusian regime.

June 8th

Alexander Lukashenko [signed](#) a law that provides for harsher penalties against demonstrators. Taking part in two unauthorised rallies is now punishable by 3 years in prison. Engaging in activities considered "extremist" or "promoting" them is punishable by 6 years in prison. Being found guilty of financing such activities is punishable by 5 years imprisonment.

In a [debate](#) in the European Parliament on the situation in Belarus, EU High Representative Josep Borrell said that new sanctions will be adopted at the next Council of Foreign Ministers on June 21st. He estimates that there are 450 political prisoners in Belarus.

The head of the EU delegation to Belarus and his American, British and Japanese counterparts met in Minsk with the Belarusian Foreign Minister. The diplomats [called](#) for an end to the persecution of opponents, the release of political prisoners and the investigation and prosecution of those responsible for the violence. They recalled that the EU, the US, the UK and Japan were ready to "support and facilitate" an inclusive dialogue to find a peaceful solution to the crisis.

June 7th

During a [call](#) with Russian President Vladimir Putin, the President of the European Council Charles Michel recalled that the Union is calling for an end to repression and the release of political prisoners in Belarus, as well as the establishment of an "inclusive dialogue" to find a solution to the crisis. He believes that Russia "can play an important role in supporting a peaceful settlement of the crisis".

June 5th

Exiled Belarusian opponents [demonstrated](#) at the Lithuanian and Polish borders with their country to demand the reopening of the borders, so that all those who wish to leave the country can do so. They are also demanding the release of political prisoners and new EU sanctions.

June 4th

The EU Council [decides](#) to close EU airspace and airports to Belarusian airlines from June 5th.

Opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaya was received in Warsaw by [Polish President](#) Andrej Duda and the [capital's mayor](#) Rafal Trzaskowski. She [called](#) on the international community to reject the confession of journalist Roman Protassevitch, which had been broadcast the previous day on Belarusian television. Arrested on May 23rd, Protassevich appeared with visible signs of violence and was forced to call for a halt to protests against the regime.

June 2nd

At a meeting of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, the Union condemned the hijacking of the Ryanair plane on May 23rd and the detention of the journalist Roman Protassevitch and his companion Sofia Sapega, who were on board. It reiterated its call for their release and that of all political prisoners. It encouraged the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to continue to support civil society in Belarus. Nine European countries endorsed the Union's [statement](#).

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Teresa Ribeiro, [calls](#) on the Belarusian authorities to release all imprisoned journalists. She stresses that the "systematic clampdown" on the media is a violation of Belarus' commitments as an OSCE member.

May 29th

[Rallies](#) in support of the Belarusian opposition took place in Warsaw and Kiev. In the Polish capital, the parents of imprisoned journalist Roman Protassevich called on the EU and the US to help them free their son and all other political prisoners.

May 28th

The European Commission presented a €3 billion [support package](#) for a future democratic Belarus. Once a democratic transition is underway, the EU will make available loans and grants to support public and private investment in the country. Five main priorities have been identified: support for the economy, connectivity and trade, innovation and digital transformation, energy and environmental transition, development of democratic and transparent institutions.

Lithuania [expelled](#) two employees of the Belarusian embassy in Vilnius for activities "incompatible with their diplomatic status", and in solidarity with Latvia, whose embassy in Minsk has been closed.

May 27th

The G7 Foreign Ministers and the EU High Representative [condemned](#) "in the strongest terms" the hijacking of the Ryanair plane on May 23rd and the arrest of journalist Roman Protassevich and his companion. They call for the release of political prisoners and declare their readiness to work, including through new sanctions, to hold Belarusian officials accountable.

EU High Representative Josep Borrell [said](#) the EU will start discussing the implementation of economic and sectoral sanctions against Belarus. The measures are being debated by the foreign ministers meeting in Lisbon.

At the request of EU countries and the United States, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) [decided](#) to open an investigation into the hijacking of the Ryanair aircraft by Belarus.

The European Cycling Union is [cancelling](#) the European Track Championships scheduled to take place in Minsk from June 23rd to 27th, "in light of the current international situation".

May 26th

The European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee is holding an [exchange of views](#) on the hijacking of the Ryanair plane that took place on May 23rd and on the detention of journalist Roman Protassevich and his partner. In a video statement, Belarusian opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaya calls on the EU to act and increase its support for civil society against the regime of Alexander Lukashenko.

The President of the European Council, Charles Michel, met with Dmitri Protassevitch, the father of the arrested journalist, to [express](#) the Union's "fullest

solidarity". He again calls on the Belarusian authorities to release all political prisoners.

May 25th

In an [open letter](#), the chairs of the Foreign Affairs Committees of several European, American and Canadian parliaments condemn the Belarusian regime's act of "state terror" against a civilian aircraft and call for the immediate release of Roman Protassevich and all political prisoners. They call on EU and NATO member states to impose sanctions against the Lukashenko regime and prevent Belarus from using Interpol and other international organisations to attack democracy in Europe.

The Council of Europe [expresses](#) its concern after [new restrictions](#) on the organisation of protests in Belarus were adopted on May 24th and urges the authorities to revoke them.

May 24th

Meeting in Brussels, European leaders [condemned](#) the [hijacking](#) of a Ryanair plane by Belarusian authorities on May 23rd and the arrest of journalist Roman Protassevich and his partner Sofia Sapega, who were on board, and called for their release.

They decided to ban the overflight of EU airspace by Belarusian airlines and to prevent access to EU airports for flights operated by these companies, and asked European airlines to avoid flying over Belarus.

They also decided to extend the list of Belarusian officials subject to sanctions, and to introduce new targeted economic sanctions.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen [said](#) a €3 billion European economic support and investment plan is "ready to go when Belarus becomes democratic".

Latvia [decided](#) to expel Belarusian diplomats from its territory, in response to the closure of its embassy in Minsk by the Belarusian regime the same day.

May 19th

The spokesperson of the European External Action Service [condemns](#) the [blocking](#) of the independent news website Tut.by on May 18th, the search of its

premises and the detention of 15 of its journalists. It calls on the Belarusian authorities to stop their harassment of journalists and calls for the release of the imprisoned journalists and all political prisoners.

May 10th

In a [video conference](#), Svetlana Tikhanovskaya discussed with the European Commission what a European plan for Belarus could be.

Meeting in Brussels, EU foreign ministers [discussed](#) Belarus, noting that "the regime continues its repression and intimidation against citizens, including the Polish community".

May 6th

Opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaya [calls](#) on Member States to adopt new sanctions against those responsible for the repression and to publish an aid plan for civil society and the Belarusian economy. She also calls for an international conference with Belarusian, European, British, American and Russian representatives.

May 5th

Ten Belarusian opposition figures [filed](#) a complaint in Germany against Alexander Lukashenko, the Belarusian President not recognised by the European Union, for "state torture". They believe that the repression against the democratic movement falls under the universal jurisdiction of German justice for crimes against humanity and systematic repression policies.

April 30th

The European Green Party [calls](#) for the release of Dmitri Kuchuk, the leader of the Green Party in Belarus. D. Kuchuk was arrested on 26th April during a march in memory of the victims of the Chernobyl disaster and sentenced to 15 days in prison.

April 29th

Opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaya was [received](#) in the Italian Chamber of Deputies for an informal hearing with the Foreign Affairs Committee. The MPs and the President of the Chamber Roberto Fico [support](#) the Belarusian people and their demand for new elections.

April 21st

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe [calls](#) for a "comprehensive" reform of the electoral system in Belarus and asks the country's authorities to comply with international standards for democratic elections. It also calls for the "urgent" opening of a "broad-based and inclusive" dialogue to peacefully end the political crisis.

The Lithuanian government [presented](#) a draft law facilitating the establishment of companies from third countries and the transfer of their employees and families. The draft is intended to enable Belarusian companies to find refuge in Lithuania. About 80 of them have already started their relocation. If the Parliament adopts the text, it will enter into force on June 1st.

April 16th

At an OSCE meeting, the Union [condemns](#) "the further escalation of repression against the Belarusian people, including orchestrated campaigns of persecution of human rights defenders, journalists, media outlets and civil society representatives". It reiterates its call on the Belarusian authorities to end the violence and unconditionally release political prisoners.

OSCE member States are [collectively calling](#) for the release of the prisoners, including the President of the Union of Poles in Belarus, Andzelika Borys, and a member of the association's board, Andrzej Poczobut.

April 12th

The European news channel Euronews is [no longer broadcasting](#) in Belarus after its permission was not renewed without notification from the authorities.

April 8th

Pavel Latushko, a former minister, ambassador and director of the national theatre who has become an opponent of the regime, [announced](#) the [creation](#) of a political

party within the democratic movement. A few days before, Viktor Babariko, currently imprisoned in Minsk, had also announced the launch of his political party, [Vmeste](#) (Together).

March 30th

In a [video conference](#) with Russian President Vladimir Putin, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel reaffirmed the need for an inclusive political dialogue and free elections in Belarus.

March 26th

The European Parliament [launched](#) a platform to fight impunity in Belarus, bringing together experts to collect information on violence and crimes committed in the country.

The EU declared to [support](#) the creation of an international accountability platform for Belarus. This initiative also aims at collecting, verifying and preserving documentation and evidence of serious human rights violations committed in Belarus during and after the rigged presidential elections of August 2020. The EU is also committed to providing financial support.

The European Broadcasting Union (EBU), which organises the Eurovision Song Contest, has announced that Belarus [will not take part](#) in this year's competition because it does not comply with the rules that songs should not have a political message. A first song was rejected in March. The second song proposed was also "in breach of the rules of the competition that ensure the Contest is not instrumentalized or brought into disrepute", the EBU [said](#).

March 25th

200-300 people are arrested and detained by the Belarusian authorities during the Freedom Day demonstration in Minsk. On this day, several European governments and institutions express their support for the Belarusian people.

Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia [add](#) 118 new Belarusian officials to the list of Belarusian officials banned from entering their territory.

EU High Representative Josep Borrell [condemns](#) the fact that the President of the Union of Poles in Belarus, Andzelika Borys, was arrested and sentenced to 15 days in prison, as well as the arrest of a member of the association's board, Andrzej Poczobut. He calls for their immediate release.

March 18th

At an OSCE meeting, the Union [reiterates](#) its support for the establishment of a dialogue between the Belarusian authorities and the political opposition, and for the organisation of a new presidential election with international observers. It also reiterates its call for the rehabilitation of political prisoners, and condemns the systematic persecution of the pro-democracy movement and the oppression of the media and civil society.

Opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaya [calls for support](#) for the Belarusian people on March 25th, Freedom Day, which commemorates the country's independence in 1918.

March 11th

The European Broadcasting Union (EBU), which organises the Eurovision song contest, [rejected](#) the song proposed by Belarus because the lyrics, which could be understood as support for the regime, do not comply with the rules of the competition, which excludes political content.

March 5th

Lithuania [rejects](#) the Belarusian authorities' request for the extradition of opposition politician Svetlana Tikhanovskaya. Lithuanian Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis [said](#) that “everyone who finds refuge in Lithuania can feel safe that they will not be extradited to regimes” that prosecute them neither for their struggle for “democracy, nor freedom of expression and religious views”. S. Tikhanovskaya has been in exile in Lithuania since August 2020, after the rigged presidential election in which she was a candidate.

March 2nd

Journalist Katsiaryna Barysevich and doctor Artsiom Sarokin are [sentenced](#) to 6 months and 2 years in prison respectively after a closed trial for leaking information on the death of Roman Bondarenko, who died in November after being beaten by plain-clothes police officers. The next day, the Union again [described](#) the violations of fundamental rights in the country as "unacceptable" and reiterated that it "continues to actively support efforts established for the

collection of the evidence of torture and repressions in Belarus and to hold those responsible to account".

February 25th

The Union [extends for one year](#), until February 28th 2022, the sanctions against those responsible for the electoral fraud during the presidential elections of August 9th 2020 and the repression against demonstrators, the opposition and journalists. 88 people, including Alexander Lukashenko, whom the Union no longer recognises as president, as well as 7 entities, are affected by these sanctions, which include an asset freeze and a ban on entry into the territory of the Union.

February 18th

The European Commission ["strongly condemns"](#) the [2-year prison sentence](#) imposed on two journalists from the opposition TV station Belsat, Daria Tchoultsova and Katerina Bakhvalova, for reporting on a demonstration. It describes the arrests and harassment of journalists as "shameful crackdown" and calls on the Belarusian regime to respect fundamental freedoms and stop targeting journalists.

February 16th

The European Commission [believes](#) that [police raids](#) on journalists, community activists and trade union leaders during the day are "unacceptable" and constitute an "escalation of intimidation and assault on civil rights".

The Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe also [denounces](#) the situation as "unacceptable".

February 11th

In a letter to a German MP [revealed](#) by the press, the German government says it is ready to welcome 50 Belarusian opponents who are victims of torture and police violence, as part of the action plan announced by Chancellor Angela Merkel on February 6th.

February 7th

Demonstrations are being held in [several countries](#) around the world on the occasion of the Day of Solidarity with Belarus, an opposition initiative to mark six months of protest against the result of the rigged presidential election of August 9th 2020.

In a [joint statement](#), EU High Representative Josep Borrell and Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Oliver Varhelyi reiterate the Union's support for the Belarusian people. They condemn unjust persecution, torture and prosecutions based on false accusations. They call for the early opening of a dialogue and new transparent elections.

February 6th

On the eve of the Day of Solidarity with Belarus, German Chancellor Angela Merkel gives her support to the Belarusian people and [announces](#) an action plan for Belarusian civil society, which will include visa facilitation, scholarships and support for independent media.

January 30th

As the demonstrations continued over the weekend despite the repression, Lithuanian President Nauseda Gitanas [nominated](#) the opponent Svetlana Tikhanovskaya and the Belarusian people for the Nobel Peace Prize.

January 27th

In [an online conference](#), opponent Svetlana Tikhanovskaya called on the West to be "braver and stronger" in support of the Belarusian people. She asked the Union to take "as soon as possible" new sanctions against the regime of Alexander Lukashenko.

January 18th

The International Ice Hockey Federation decides that the world championship, scheduled for May and June in Minsk and Riga, will not be held in Belarus. It [explains](#) that keeping the competition in the capital would not have been "appropriate" and that the safety of the participants could not be guaranteed.

Athletes and politicians had called for this decision and several companies sponsoring the event had [threatened to withdraw](#) in the name of human rights.

January 17th

While protests continue in Belarus, on a small scale due to cold weather conditions and repression, Svetlana Tikhanovskaya [speaks](#) at the online congress of the German Christian Democratic Union (CDU). She reminds that the demonstrators are fighting to "build a democratic Belarus, based on the rule of law, democracy and respect for the citizens".

2020

December 17th

The Union [extends its sanctions](#) to 36 new officials responsible for the repression against demonstrators, the opposition and journalists. 88 individuals and 7 entities, including the unrecognized President Alexander Lukashenko, are now subject to an asset freeze and a ban on entry into the Union.

December 16th

Opponent Svetlana Tikhanovskaya [receives the 2020 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought](#) on behalf of the democratic opposition in Belarus at a ceremony at the European Parliament in Brussels.

[In her speech](#) she said that Belarusians who have been protesting since the rigged presidential election on August 9th "are demonstrating for the freedom and dignity of Belarusians, of Europeans, yours and ours. »

She stresses that "every Belarusian who takes part in a peaceful demonstration against violence and lawlessness ... is a hero. Each of them is an example of courage, compassion and dignity in my eyes. »

December 13th

More than 120 [demonstrations](#) take place in Minsk and other cities of the country. At least 300 people are arrested.

December 11th

The European Commission announces [a €24 million support](#) to civil society in Belarus, through assistance to independent media and NGOs, and a scholarship programme for young people in particular. The aid plan also aims to build the resilience of Belarusian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and to support the health sector. More than 150,000 people have been infected with Covid-19 in the country.

December 9th

The Prosecutor General of Lithuania [opens a preliminary investigation](#) for crimes against humanity and war crimes against members of the Belarusian regime. Lithuania is the first EU country to launch an investigation into crimes committed by the regime since the August 9th presidential election. Opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaya calls on other European countries to follow Lithuania's example.

December 6th

In Minsk, demonstrators [gather](#) again in small groups to avoid police repression. About 300 people are arrested.

December 4th

The UN Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet [notes](#) that the situation has deteriorated in Belarus in recent weeks, "particularly with respect to the right of peaceful assembly". She estimates that some 27,000 people have been arrested in connection with peaceful demonstrations since August 9th. She calls on the authorities to release all those detained illegally or arbitrarily and to open a political dialogue with the opposition.

November 29th

The inhabitants of Minsk have been [demonstrating](#) like every Sunday since August 9th, but by organising " marches of neighbours" in order to limit the risk of police repression. Several dozen people were arrested nevertheless.

November 27th

Visiting a hospital, Alexander Lukashenko [said](#) he will no longer be president when the new constitution is in place. But he gives no indication of the content of the constitutional reform he is preparing, nor when it might be adopted.

November 26th

In [a resolution](#) adopted by 613 votes to 41, the European Parliament "condemns in the strongest possible terms the murder of Raman Bandarenko", who died after being beaten up by plainclothes policemen, and calls for "immediate, thorough, impartial and independent" investigations into his death and that of several other demonstrators.

MEPs reiterate their support for the Belarusian people, call for the immediate release of political prisoners and call on the regime to stop violence against demonstrators and journalists.

They support the initiation of an immediate European Parliament fact-finding mission to Vilnius and Warsaw, as well as engagement with the opposition in Belarus in order to "explore possible mediation and democracy-support activities". They consider the current sanctions against the regime to be insufficient and are calling for new ones.

They also call for more EU support for civil society in Belarus.

November 22nd

The Sunday demonstration against the regime in Minsk ended in new clashes with the security forces and [more than 300 arrests](#).

November 20th

Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia [decide to impose](#) an entry ban on 26 Belarusians, including the Minister of Information, the Minister of Sports and Tourism, as well

as other senior officials from the Ministries of Interior and Justice, representatives of trade unions and state media involved in misinformation.

November 19th

The European foreign affairs ministers [agreed](#) to prepare a third round of sanctions, which could target high-ranking Belarusian officials, as well as "institutions, entrepreneurs and firms", according to High Representative Josep Borrell.

November 15th

The demonstration held in Minsk like every Sunday pays homage to Raman Bandarenko, who died after being beaten by men in civilian clothes near a place decorated in the colours of the opposition. More than 1000 people are [arrested](#) by the police.

November 13th

In [a statement](#), the EU said that the death of Raman Bandarenko, a 31-year-old Belarusian who died after being beaten by men who were probably plainclothes policemen, is the "outrageous and shameful result of the actions by the Belarusian authorities who have not only directly and violently carried out repression of their own population, but also created an environment whereby such lawless, violent acts can take place".

The Union once again calls on the regime to stop the "violence and persecution", to release political prisoners and to investigate and prosecute human rights violations.

November 8th

Another Sunday of demonstrations in Minsk and other cities of the country resulted in the arrest of [several hundred people](#).

November 6th

The EU [adopts sanctions](#) against 15 leaders of the Belarusian regime, including Alexander Lukashenko and his son, for their role in the violent repression of the democratic movement. The sanctions include a travel ban within the Union and the freezing of personal assets.

November 5th

In [a report](#) on the August 9th election, the OSCE said the poll was "neither transparent, free, or fair". It states that the allegations of human rights violations by the regime are "massive and systematic and proven beyond doubt". The report notes that the repression of the protests has resulted in torture and abuse in a climate of "general impunity".

Consequently, the OSCE calls for the annulment of the election results and the organisation of "genuine" elections, the ending of violence, the release of all political prisoners and journalists and the respect of international rules of justice.

November 1st

For the 13th consecutive Sunday, thousands of Belarusians [demonstrated](#) against the regime, despite ammunition threats by the security forces. About 300 people are arrested in Minsk. The strike launched by Svetlana Tikhanovskaya continues in some factories, administrations and universities.

October 26th

The opponent Svetlana Tikhanovskaya announces the [start of a general strike](#) to demand the resignation of Aleksandr Lukashenko, whom she had given until 25 October to leave power. She claims that "employees of state factories and enterprises, transport workers and miners, teachers and students" have stopped work.

The day before, as every Sunday since the rigged election of August 9th, thousands of people demonstrated in Minsk and other cities in the country.

October 22nd

The Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought [is awarded](#) by the European Parliament to the democratic opposition in Belarus represented by the Coordination Council.

Parliament President David Sassoli congratulates the opposition representatives for "their courage, resilience and determination". He stresses that they "have on their side something that brute force can never defeat - and this is the truth." "Dear laureates, stay strong and not to give up on your fight. Know that we are by your side," he adds.

The award ceremony will take place on December 16th.

October 21st

In a [resolution](#) adopted by 602 votes to 44, the European Parliament supports the Union's decision not to recognise Alexander Lukashenko as President of Belarus after the end of his term of office on November 5th and calls for him to be included in the list of persons sanctioned.

The Parliament recognises the Coordination Council "as the legitimate representative of the people demanding democratic change and freedom in Belarus" and supports its efforts for "a peaceful and democratic transition of power as a result of an inclusive national dialogue".

It calls on the Union to rapidly implement the planned sanctions against those responsible for the regime, to review its relations with Belarus and to put in place measures to provide economic and financial support to Belarusian civil society.

October 18th

As every Sunday since the rigged election of August 9th, thousands of demonstrators [gather in Minsk](#) and in other Belarusian cities and dozens of them are arrested by the police.

October 16th

The [European Council "endorses"](#) the conclusions adopted by the ministers on October 12th on sanctions against those in charge within the Belarusian regime and the reduction of political and economic relations. It condemns the continuing violence against peaceful demonstrators.

October 13th

The opposition leader Svetlana Tsikhanovskaya, who has fled to Lithuania, gives Alexander Lukashenko until October 25th to announce his resignation, end the dispersal of the demonstrations by force and release all political prisoners.

"If our demands are not met by October 25th, the whole country will take to the streets peacefully. And on October 26th, a national strike by all companies will begin, all roads will be blocked, sales in state-owned shops will collapse", [S. Tsikhanovskaya warns](#).

October 12th

At their meeting in Luxembourg, [the EU foreign ministers reiterated](#) that Alexander Lukashenko has "no democratic legitimacy", condemned the violence against the protesters and once again called on the Belarusian authorities to seek a "peaceful and democratic solution" to the crisis.

Ministers declared their readiness to adopt new sanctions against Belarusian officials, "including A. Lukashenko".

They decide to reduce political and economic relations with the Belarusian authorities and to redirect them towards civil society. They announce that additional resources will be allocated to support young people, vulnerable people, independent media, and the private and health sectors.

The European Parliament selects "the democratic opposition in Belarus, represented by the Coordination Council" as one of the three [finalists for the 2020 Sakharov Prize](#) for Freedom of Thought. The final vote takes place on 22 October.

October 11th

Belarusian police [forcibly disperse further](#) protests gathering several thousand people in Minsk and arrest at least 250 people in the capital and other cities of the country.

The day before, Alexander Lukashenko had organised a [filmed meeting](#) in the KGB prison with several political prisoners including former presidential candidate Viktor Babariko and several members of the opposition Coordination Council.

October 7th

[At a hearing](#) by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the French National Assembly, Svetlana Tsikhanovskaya appealed to France: "Help the Belarusian people, help to avoid violence and civil conflict! Help to end this crisis in a dignified way, help us to conduct free and fair elections".

October 6th

German Chancellor Angela Merkel receives the opponent Svetlana Tsikhanovskaya in Berlin, who [calls on European countries](#) to maintain pressure on the Belarusian regime.

October 4th

Despite a warning from the authorities and further arrests, tens of thousands of people are again demonstrating in Minsk and other cities across the country. The Belarusian Human Rights Centre Viasna counts 77 "political prisoners".

[In a statement](#), the High Representative of the Union Josep Borrell considered it "unfounded and regrettable" that the Belarusian authorities are asking Poland and Lithuania to recall their ambassadors and reduce their diplomatic staff in Minsk.

October 2nd

The Council [imposes sanctions](#) on 40 individuals responsible for the repression and intimidation of demonstrators. The measures include a travel ban and a freeze on financial assets.

October 1st

[Meeting in Brussels on October 1st](#), the European Council condemns "the unacceptable violence by Belarusian authorities against peaceful protesters, as well as intimidation, arbitrary arrests and detentions following the presidential elections, the results of which it does not recognise."

It calls for an end to repression, the release of political prisoners and the opening of a political dialogue. It calls on the Council to introduce sanctions and encourages the Commission to prepare a "comprehensive plan of economic support for democratic Belarus".

September 28th

President Emmanuel Macron [is visiting Lithuania and Latvia](#). In Vilnius he met S. Tsikhanovskaya, who [accepts France's invitation](#) to come and address the National Assembly.

September 25th

The Baltic States [have expanded](#) their sanctions against Belarusian officials.

September 24th

The European Union refused to recognise Alexander Lukashenko as President of Belarus. EU High Representative [Josep Borrell said](#) that the swearing-in and "the new mandate claimed by Aleksandr Lukashenko lack any democratic legitimacy".

September 23rd

Alexander Lukashenko [was sworn in](#) for a sixth term.

September 21st

Svetlana Tsikhanovskaya meets EU foreign ministers in Brussels. She is also received at the European Parliament, where she [declares](#) that the protest movement is not a geopolitical revolution, that it is "it is neither pro-Russian nor anti-Russian, not pro-EU nor anti-EU, (...) it is simply pro-Belarus and a democratic revolution".

Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda, [presented an economic assistance plan](#) prepared with Poland and Romania to help "democratic Belarus". The three countries propose a preferential trade regime between the EU and Belarus, the possibility for Belarusians to enter the EU without visas and support for the country's application for accession to the World Trade Organisation. This plan should be presented by Lithuania, Poland and Romania to the European partners at the European Council, postponed from September 24th and 25th to October 1st and 2nd.

September 20th

Despite the mobilisation of the police, tens of thousands of people demonstrated in Minsk.

September 17th

The European Parliament rejects [in a resolution](#) the results of the "so-called presidential election". It announces that it will not recognise A. Lukashenko as President at the end of his current term of office and that it regards the Coordination Council as the "interim representation of the people demanding democratic change".

The Parliament condemns the repression "in the strongest possible terms" and calls for the "immediate and unconditional release" of all political prisoners. It calls for sanctions against state officials, including A. Lukashenko.

On the same day, Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki [proposed](#) that the Union set up a stabilisation fund for Belarus of at least €1 billion. He will submit his project to the European Council on September 24th and 25th.

September 15th

The European Parliament's Renew Europe group [proposes to award the 2020 Sakharov Prize](#) to "the democratic opposition in Belarus, represented - amongst others - by Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, president-elect of Belarus, Siarhei Tsikhanousky, video blogger and political prisoner, Ales Bialiatski, founder of the Belarusian human rights organisation "Viasna", Stepan Svetlov, founder of the Telegram channel NEXTA, Mikola Statkevich, political prisoner and presidential candidate in the 2010 elections, and Svetlana Alexievich, member of the National Coordination Council of Belarus and Nobel Laureate."

On September 16th, the Group of the European People's Party in the Parliament also [proposed to award the prize](#) to "the democratic opposition of Belarus represented by the Coordination Council and a number of opposition figures including Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya".

September 13th

More than 100,000 people are marching again in Minsk. The authorities announce 400 arrests. Since his exile, S. Tsikhanouskaya salutes "a truly heroic people" who continue their "fight for freedom".

September 11th

In a [statement on behalf of the Union](#), J. Borrell "deploras the escalation of violence and forced exile of members of the Coordination Council". He called for members of the Council and Belarusian civil society to be "protected from intimidation, forced exile, arbitrary arrest and violence".

He calls for the release of prisoners and recalls that the Union is "determined" to take sanctions against those responsible for the repression.

September 10th

After the visit of some diplomats the day before, Ambassadors from 10 Member States and diplomats from 5 other Member States [visit](#) Nobel Prize winner Svetlana Alexievitch at her home in Minsk to offer their support. S. Alexievitch is the last member of the Coordination Council to have been neither arrested nor exiled and is subject to regular threats.

September 9th

The Socialists and Democrats Group in the European Parliament [proposes to award this year's Sakharov Prize](#), attributed by the Parliament to human rights defenders, "to the brave Belarusian women in general, and in particular to Svetlana Tsikhanouskaya, Maria Kalesnikava, and Veranika Tsapkala".

September 8th

The Secretary General of the Council of Europe Marija Pejcinovic Buric [calls for an end to the "repressive developments"](#) of the Belarusian regime and calls for a "fair and open dialogue with the civil society in view of preparing and conducting necessary reforms with no delay", for which she offers the Council of Europe's assistance.

[Svetlana Tikhanovskaya addresses](#) the Political Affairs Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. She assured that the Coordination Council, "despite the repression, is still engaged in dialogue" and recalled that "Mr Lukashenko does not have any legitimacy" after the rigged election.

September 7th

Maryia Kalesnikova, is abducted in Minsk and then arrested when she refuses to be forcibly deported to Ukraine.

In a [communiqué](#), the High Representative Josep Borrell condemns in the name of the Union "the unabating arbitrary and unexplained arrests and detentions" and demands the immediate release of all political prisoners arrested before and after the August 9th election.

September 6th

As every Sunday, tens of thousands of people demonstrate in Minsk and other cities of the country. The authorities reported the arrest of more than 600 people.

September 1st

Students start a strike movement at the beginning of the academic year. In the following days, several dozens of them were arrested on campus.

August 31st

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania blacklist Lukashenko and around 30 other senior Belarusian officials, who are banned from entering the territory of the 3 countries.

August 30th

Tens of thousands of people demonstrated again in Minsk and other cities of the country. Dozens of people were arrested.

In an op-ed published in the French Journal du Dimanche, the High Representative of the Union [Josep Borrell called for elections](#) to resolve the crisis: "The best solution would be to replay the game under the control of the OSCE".

August 29th

Belarusian authorities withdrew the accreditations of several foreign media covering the protest movement and the repression.

August 28th

At a [special meeting of the OSCE Standing Committee](#), Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama, Chairman-in-Office of the organization, renewed the offer to act as "facilitator of the necessary dialogue" between the government and the Belarusian opposition.

August 27th

Meeting in Berlin, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Union [decided to sanction several high-ranking Belarusian officials](#). The final list will be finalized in the coming days.

August 26th

Summoned by the investigators in the context of legal proceedings against the protest movement, Nobel Prize winner Svetlana Alexievich refused to answer questions. The arrests of opponents continue.

August 25th

Svetlana Tsikhanouskaya spoke [at an extraordinary meeting of the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee](#). She declared that a "peaceful revolution is under way": "The revolution in Belarus is not a geopolitical revolution. It is neither a pro or anti-Russian revolution, it is neither a pro or anti-European Union revolution. It is a democratic revolution".

August 24th

Sergei Dilevsky and Olga Kovalkova, members of the "Coordination Council" to promote a peaceful transition of power, were arrested in front of the striking Minsk Tractor Plant (MTZ).

August 23rd

A further demonstration in Minsk brought together about 100,000 people.

Human chains are being formed in Lithuania, where Svetlana Tsikhanouskaya is a refugee, as well as in Estonia and Latvia, in support of the Belarusian people.

August 22nd

Alexandre Lukashenko asked the army to prepare for action.

August 20th

President Emmanuel Macron and Chancellor Angela Merkel [meet at Fort Brégançon](#). They repeated the Union's offer of mediation and assured Russian President Vladimir Putin that the Union does not see the crisis in Belarus as a "replica" of that in Ukraine.

August 19th

[Meeting in an extraordinary videoconference](#), the heads of state and government of the Union reiterated that the election was "neither free nor fair" and that they do not acknowledge the result.

They declared that "the citizens of Belarus have the right to decide their future" and condemned "the disproportionate and unacceptable violence used by the national authorities against peaceful demonstrators". "The EU calls for a thorough and transparent investigation of all alleged cases of abuse".

They confirmed that the Union "will soon impose sanctions against a large number of those responsible for the violence, repression and falsification of election results.

They added: "We call on the Belarusian authorities to find a way out of the crisis by putting an end to the violence, easing tensions and engaging in an inclusive national dialogue," and expressed their readiness to contribute to a peaceful solution.

August 17th

Strikes were organized in many factories.

[The OSCE offers its mediation](#) for an "open and constructive" dialogue between the government and the opposition.

August 16th

About 100,000 people demonstrated in Minsk, the largest protest rally in the country's history. Thousands more people are gathering all over the country.

From Lithuania, Svetlana Tsikhanouskaya called for an indefinite strike by Belarusians.

August 14th

[At an extraordinary meeting](#), the European Ministers of Foreign Affairs considered that the results of the ballot "were falsified".

They proposed mediation by the Union to "establish and facilitate a dialogue between the political authorities, the opposition and society in general" in Belarus.

They decided to prepare sanctions against those responsible for the violence, repression and falsification of the electoral results".

August 12th

The authorities announced the death in Gomel of a second demonstrator while in detention after the August 9th demonstrations.

August 11th

Svetlana Tikhanovskaya took refuge in Lithuania.

In [a statement on behalf of the Union](#), the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, said the election was "neither free nor fair.

He added: "We call on Belarusian political leaders to engage in a real and inclusive dialogue with all parts of society in order to avoid further violence. The EU will continue to support a democratic, independent, sovereign, prosperous and stable Belarus."

August 10th

China and Russia acknowledge the outcome of the election, which is being challenged by the Member States of the European Union.

Demonstrations continued, one demonstrator was killed, 2,000 people were arrested.

August 9th

Presidential election in Belarus

The outgoing President Alexander Lukashenko won with 80.23% of the votes. Svetlana Tsikhanouskaya, opposition candidate after the imprisonment of her husband, the opponent Sergei Tikhanovski, was officially credited with 9.9%.

Demonstrations took place in the capital Minsk, 3,000 people were arrested.