

CONCLUSIONS BY PDT OF EUROPEAN COUNCIL MICHEL'S FOLLOWING THE CONF ON 19 AUGUST

OVER BELARUS RIOTS AFTER ELECTIONS

Paris Washington DC, 20.08.2020, 17:00 Time

USPA NEWS - The 27 EU leaders met on Wednesday for an extraordinary summit via video conference. A "substantial" number of Belarusian officials are targeted by the sanctions, said European Council President Charles Michel. For his part, Mr. Loukachenko (New President elected in Belarus) stands firm. For the second day in a row, he convened his Security Council on Wednesday, ordering to ensure that there is "no more trouble in Minsk", because "people are tired, asking for peace and quiet ". Indeed, the Belarusian presidential election of 2020 takes place on August 9, 2020 in order to elect the President of the Republic of Belarus. Outgoing President Alexander Lukashenko, in power since 1994 and candidate for a sixth term is officially re-elected with 80.08% of the vote against the opposition candidate Svetlana Tsikhanovskaya, who replaced her imprisoned husband Siarhei Tsikhanouski. This election is controversial due to suspicions of electoral fraud and triggers major protests. We publish the conclusions of Charles Michel President of the European Council, after the European council which took place on August 19, of the twenty-seven Member States of the European Union, through a web conference.

"The members of the European Council discussed the situation in Belarus following the presidential elections on 9 August.

The EU has been following the developments in Belarus very closely and with increasing concern. The 9 August elections were neither free nor fair, therefore we do not recognise the results. The people of Belarus have a right to determine their future. The members of the European Council express their clear solidarity with the people of Belarus in their desire to exercise their fundamental democratic rights. The members of the European Council condemn the disproportionate and unacceptable violence displayed by the state authorities against peaceful protesters. Violence must be avoided and all those unlawfully detained must be immediately and unconditionally released. Civil society and opposition actors engaged in discussions of political transition must be protected from arbitrary arrests and violence. The EU expects a complete and transparent investigation into all alleged abuses. The EU will shortly impose sanctions against a substantial number of individuals responsible for violence, repression and the falsification of election results. Progress made in the past years in the relationship between the EU and Belarus is at risk. Any further deterioration of the situation will impact on our relationship and have negative consequences. We call on the Belarusian authorities to find a way out of the crisis through an end to violence, de-escalation, and an inclusive national dialogue. Only a peaceful and democratic process, underpinned by independent and free media and a strong civil society, can provide sustainable solutions. All parties, including third states, should support such a process. We will continue to follow the situation closely and stand ready to contribute to efforts to peacefully end the crisis. The EU fully supports OSCE proposals for dialogue in Belarus and is ready to provide assistance to further them." President of European Council Charles Michels declared.

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

The situation in the Eastern Mediterranean and the relations with Turkey were raised by some Member States. We are increasingly concerned about the growing tensions and stressed the urgent need to de-escalate. We expressed our full solidarity with Greece and Cyprus and recalled and reaffirmed our previous conclusions on the illegal drilling activities. We agreed to revert to these issues during our meeting in September. All options will be on the table.

MALI SITUATION-----

The events in Mali are of deep concern and can have a destabilising impact on the entire region and on the fight against terrorism. The EU calls for an immediate release of prisoners and restoration of the rule of law. The EU works in full coordination with African and international partners and supports ECOWAS efforts to find a solution in line with the aspirations of the Malian people." President of European Council Charles Michels declared.

RELATIONS BELARUS AND EUROPEAN UNION

Presidential elections

On 9 August, presidential elections took place in the Republic of Belarus. Credible reports from domestic observers show that the process did not meet the international standards expected of a participating state of the OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe). Following protests, state authorities deployed disproportionate violence causing at least two deaths and many injuries.

EU heads of state and government held a video conference to discuss the situation in Belarus. The conclusions by President Charles Michel following the video conference affirm that the EU does not recognise the election results presented by the Belarus authorities. EU leaders condemned the violence against peaceful protesters and expressed solidarity with the people of Belarus. Leaders agreed on imposing sanctions on the individuals responsible for violence, repression, and election fraud.

EU foreign ministers held a video conference on 14 August on Belarus. They agreed on the need to sanction those responsible for violence, repression and the falsification of election results. They called on the Belarusian authorities to stop the disproportionate and unacceptable violence against peaceful protesters and to release those detained.

EU relations with Belarus include:

- “€ technical dialogues on specific topics

- “€ cooperation through the multilateral track of the Eastern Partnership

- “€ support to civil society and victims of repression

- “€ visa facilitation and readmission agreements with Belarus which entered into force on 1 July 2020

- “€ several cooperation projects launched in 2018 and 2019 in the area of border and migration management

- “€ dialogue on the reforms needed to modernise Belarus and on the potential for developing relations with the EU (including possible EU financial support). Source: European Council

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