

## **A Joint Address by the Coalition for a European Continent Undivided by Visa Barriers on the Presidential Election in Belarus of December 19, 2010**

The Coalition for a European Continent Undivided by Visa Barriers expresses utmost concern about the ongoing human rights violations in Belarus that started on December 19, 2010:

- The peaceful demonstration against fraudulent election results that took place on December 19, 2010 was violently dispersed and resulted in the arrest of over 600 persons. The daily arrests took place also well beyond election day, and searches of homes and offices of members of political, social and human rights organizations and journalists continue to this day.
- Seven candidates for the Belarusian presidency were arrested in violation of Belarusian law (which guarantees their legal immunity at least until the official election results are announced) and have been held in custody in the investigative isolation unit of the Belarusian KGB. Many Belarusian citizens face charges of participating in and organizing mass unrest, which carry the possibility of imprisonment from 5 to 15 years.
- The situation of the detainees is unacceptable. After violent arrests during which many of the arrested protestors and all of the arrested candidates experienced physical violence, they were detained for two weeks with restricted access to medical care, contacts with their relatives and legal assistance.
- Students who participated in the demonstration might face expulsion from universities all across Belarus.

The repressive acts of the Belarusian government against its citizens can no longer be regarded as a domestic issue and requires joint action by all EU Member States and the EU institutions. The Coalition for a European Continent Undivided by Visa Barriers strongly believes that visa policy is one of the best tools for expressing solidarity with Belarusian society and imposing selective sanctions on government officials according to the principle that any sanctions against the government must not infringe upon the well-being of ordinary citizens.

Therefore, the Coalition for a European Continent Undivided by Visa Barriers calls on the governments of all EU Member States and the EU institutions to follow the positive example set by Poland as of January 1, 2011:

- **To waive the fees charged for national visa processing and issuance for citizens of the Republic of Belarus.**
- **To restore previous and impose additional visa sanctions on Belarusian officials and representatives of law enforcement and judicial agencies participating in and responsible for the violence against peaceful protestors and mass human rights violations.**

The Coalition also urges that the perspective of visa-free travel be kept open to Belarus (as foreseen by the Eastern Partnership) and that the negotiations on a Visa Facilitation Agreement be sustained.

### **Signatories:**

#### **Members of the Coalition:**

Analytical Center on Globalization and Regional Cooperation, Armenia  
Association for International Affairs (AMO), the Czech Republic

Belarus Watch, Lithuania  
Center for International Relations, Poland  
Center for Social Innovations, Belarus  
Eastern Europe Studies Centre, Lithuania  
ECAS, Brussels  
Education for Democracy Foundation, Poland  
Europe without Barriers, Ukraine  
Free Belarus Initiative, Poland  
Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies  
Hungarian Europe Society  
Institute for Euro-Atlantic Cooperation, Ukraine  
Institute for Public Policy, Moldova  
Institute of Public Affairs, Poland  
International Consortium EUROBELARUS  
Office for Democratic Belarus, Belarus/Brussels  
Open Society Institute, Brussels  
Open Society Institute Sofia, Bulgaria  
Östgruppen - Swedish Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights  
Public Movement "Multinational Georgia" (PMMG)  
Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, Slovakia  
Soros Foundation, Latvia  
Stefan Batory Foundation, Poland  
Ternopil'ska Foundation, Poland

**Partner Organizations:**

Balkan Investigative Reporting Network in Kosovo  
Balkan Policy Institute – IPOL, Kosovo  
Belarusian Human Rights House in exile in Vilnius, Lithuania  
Centre for Research, Documentation and Publication (CRDP) in Kosovo  
Christian Democrats International Center, Sweden  
Civic Belarus, the Czech Republic  
College of Eastern Europe, Poland  
Czech Council of Children and Youth  
DEMAS – Association for Democracy Assistance and Human Rights, the Czech Republic  
East European Democratic Centre, Poland  
Educational Society for Malopolska, Poland  
ENCOMPASS - Centre for Psychological and Social Studies and Services, Kosovo  
EuroCivitas Policy Centre, Latvia  
European Humanities University, Lithuania  
European Institute for Democracy, Poland  
EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy, the Czech Republic  
Forum 2000 Foundation, the Czech Republic  
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, Poland  
Institute of Democratic Politics, Lithuania  
International Non-government Organization "Centre for Civil Initiatives OUR HOUSE", Belarus  
Laboremus - Social Democratic Students at Uppsala University, Sweden  
The New Way for Belarus, Estonia  
Open Estonia Foundation  
Organization of Belarusians in Sweden  
People in Need, the Czech Republic  
Swedish PEN  
The Third Way Liberal Community, Belarus