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Plenary sitting

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<TitreType>MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION</TitreType>

<TitreSuite>with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law</TitreSuite>

<TitreRecueil>pursuant to Rule 135 of the Rules of Procedure</TitreRecueil>

<Titre>on Belarus</Titre>

<DocRef>(2017/2647(RSP))</DocRef>

<RepeatBlock-By><Depute>Lola Sánchez Caldentey, Tania González Peñas, Estefanía Torres Martínez, Xabier Benito Ziluaga, Miguel Urbán Crespo, Dimitrios Papadimoulis, Stelios Kouloglou, Kostadinka Kuneva, Helmut Scholz</Depute>

<Commission><OptDel>{GUE}on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group</OptDel></Commission>

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B8‑0259/2017

European Parliament resolution on Belarus

(2017/2647(RSP))

*The European Parliament*,

– having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,

1. Whereas the Presidential Decree No.3 "On the Prevention of Social Dependency" taxes Belarusian citizens who does not work more than 183 days and is not declared officially unemployed them around 240 Euro a year (so-called tax on unemployment); whereas the decree was received with widespread criticism from citizens, activists and journalists who oppose the law and are critical of the government; whereas president Lukashenko announced on 9 March that he would suspend the tax until his government had reviewed the policy in response to the protests of the last weeks;
2. Whereas since early February, demonstrators have been continuously protesting against the decree; whereas according to Human Rights Centre Viasna, as of the end of the day on 27 March, a total of 177 people had been handed court rulings on administrative charges over their participation in 25 March protests, with 144 in Minsk, and 33 outside the capital city; whereas according to the Committee to Protect Journalists at least eight journalists are still jailed for reporting on Belarus protest;
3. Whereas the economic and social situation in Belarus is worsening; whereas the real income of households contracted by 7.5 per cent in 2016;
4. Whereas Belarus continues to be the only European country where the death penalty is still in use; whereas a death sentence was pronounced on Aliaksei Mikhalenia on 17 March 2017, in contradiction of the commitment made by the Belarussian authorities to consider the introduction of a moratorium on the death penalty:
5. Whereas during the last three years a number of steps have been taken in order to develop EU-Belarus relations; whereas the EU lifted most of its restrictive measures against Belarusian officials and legal entities in February 2016; whereas EU-Belarus cooperation was developed in a number of economic and trade- and assistance-related fields and the possibility for Belarus to apply for EIB and EBRD financing has been opened;
6. Whereas since 2016, large numbers of asylum seekers, mostly from the Russian Republic of Chechnya, but also from Tajikistan and Georgia, have tried to apply for asylum in Poland at the border with Belarus; whereas under Polish law, the Office of Foreigners, Poland’s asylum authority, not the Border Guard Services, is responsible for deciding on asylum applications: whereas border guards carried out interviews for two to 10 minutes, and then refuse the vast majority of applicants access to the asylum procedure; whereas asylum seekers do not have access to the needed judicial assistance as no layers or NGOs can access the centres in which asylum seekers are interrogated; whereas thereby asylum seekers have been denied access to a normal asylum procedure; whereas sending asylum seekers back to Belarus means exposing them to possible violence, persecution and backflow;
7. Whereas the European Commission has failed to look into Poland’s denial of access to asylum procedures at its border with Belarus.
8. Whereas the Commission plans to provide Belarus €7 million in financial support to build open and closed reception facilities for so-called irregular migrants as part of a wider deal on migration cooperation including a future readmission agreement; whereas as result asylum seekers face the danger to be send back to countries that they are trying to flee risking their freedom, security and life;
9. Expresses deep concern at the Presidential Decree No.3 "On the Prevention of Social Dependency” which is contrary to Art. 41 of the Belarusian Constitution [[1]](#endnote-1)and violates international human rights law; calls on its abolishment of the Presidential Decree No.3;
10. Calls on the Belarussian authorities
    1. to respect the right to peaceful assembly and expression
    2. to ensure that journalists are able to fully exercise their professional duties, including during peaceful demonstrations;
    3. to immediately and unconditionally release all protesters, journalists, human rights defenders, civil society activists and opposition members who have been detained in connection with the current wave of demonstrations solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of assembly and expression;
11. Reiterates its general position on death penalty; calls on Belarus to join the global moratorium as a first step towards the abolition of the death penalty;
12. Calls on the EU to sustain the momentum for the further normalization of the relations with Belarus; reiterates its view that existing differences can be best addressed through enhanced channels of communication and dialogue with Belarussian partners and in particular its citizens;
13. Calls for normal parliamentary relations to be established between the European Parliament and the Parliament of Belarus; takes the view that this is the appropriate framework for a comprehensive dialogue on issues of common interest, including those where the partners have fundamental differences;
14. Condemns the Polish border guards’ practice of routinely denying people access to the asylum procedure at the border with Belarus which violates the right to asylum under the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights; deeply deplores the failure of the European Commission to look into Poland’s denial of access to asylum procedures at its border with Belarus and its compatibility with Union and international right
15. Denounces the plans of the European Commission to provide Belarus €7 million in financial support to build open and closed reception facilities for irregular migrants as part of a wider deal on migration cooperation including a future readmission agreement in disregard for human rights and in particular migrants rights and most particularly asylum seekers;
16. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the parliaments and governments of the Member States and the Parliament and Government of Belarus.

1. Article 41. “Citizens of the Republic of Belarus shall be guaranteed the right to work as the worthiest means of an individual's self-assertion, that is, the right to choose of one's profession, type of occupation and work in accordance with one's vocation, capabilities, education and vocational training, and having regard to social needs, and the right to healthy and safe working conditions. The State shall create conditions necessary for full employment of the population. Where a person is unemployed for reasons which are beyond one's control, he shall be guaranteed training in new specializations and an upgrading of his qualifications having regard to social needs, and to an unemployment benefit in accordance with the law. Citizens shall have the right to protection of their economic and social interests, including the right to form trade unions and conclude collective contracts (agreements), and the right to strike. Forced labour shall be prohibited, other than work or service specified in the verdict of a court of law or in accordance with the law on the state of emergency or martial law.” [↑](#endnote-ref-1)