



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on the situation in Belarus

As delivered by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1278th special meeting of the Permanent Council,
28 August 2020

Mr. Chairperson-in-Office,

At the outset we wish to thank Albanian Chairmanship for convening today's special meeting of the Permanent Council on the situation in Belarus.

We welcome the joint proposal of the current Albanian and incoming Swedish OSCE Chairpersons-in-Office to pay visit to Belarus to meet with the representatives of the government and opposition and support dialogue.

We share your, Mr. Prime Minister, view that there is the urgent need for full compliance with OSCE principles and commitments, including the promotion and protection of fundamental freedoms and human rights, and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. All participating States have agreed that the commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs.

Distinguished colleagues,

Belarus is a close neighbour of Ukraine, with which we have always been building friendly relationship and wish to do so in the future. We strongly believe that respect for human rights and dialogue are two pillars needed for the restoration of stability in Belarus.

Ukraine shares the approach expressed by the European Union on the elections and ensuing developments in Belarus.

The events on the ground make it clear that the officially announced results of the election of the President of the Republic of Belarus do not inspire confidence in the Belarusian society.

We share deep concerns about cases of unjustified cruelty of law enforcement officers against citizens participating in the protests, as well as media representatives. It is important to prevent further political persecution of opponents and Belarusian citizens who took to the streets to demonstrate their position, and to thoroughly investigate all allegations of the use of force against peaceful protesters.

The release of detainees from custody could be the beginning of a dialogue between the authorities and civil society in order to find compromises.

Ukraine proceeds from the premise that concrete decisions aimed at overcoming the political crisis should be taken within the framework of this dialogue. International mediation could be a valuable asset in this regard.

That said, we should be especially vigilant against attempts to create additional tension within Belarusian society, as well as to vilify its neighboring countries. In particular, we are concerned about reports that people in the territory of temporary occupied parts of Donbas, which are under full military, administrative, financial and other control of the Russian Federation, are being recruited either to work in the coal mines or to fulfil a sort of security tasks in Belarus. These concerns are compounded by the statements of President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin that certain force reserves were set up to be used if the situation in Belarus gets out of control. Therefore, we fully join the international community in its call to the Russian Federation to refrain from activities, including intervention, which might further destabilize the situation in Belarus.

Ukraine is ready to make every effort to help Belarus pass this difficult stage without weakening its sovereignty and to resolve the crisis based on respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms of its citizens. Stability and democratic development of neighbouring Belarus are extremely important for Ukraine.

I thank you.