

Motion

Motion on Non-Discrimination of Young Belarusian Activists and Support for Democratic Principles in Europe

submitted by Belarusian
National Youth Council (RADA)

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Belarusian and European civil society strongly condemn the military invasion by the Russian army into the territory of sovereign Ukraine. We believe that any military action on the territory of an independent country is not only a violation of norms and principles of international law and human rights, but also a violation of the right to life and peaceful future of all Ukrainian youth and young people living on the territory of Ukraine.

Over the past two years representatives of independent youth organizations in Europe, belarusian youth NGOs, have shown their strong determination and will to revitalise democracy and to defend youth rights. Belarusian civil society has suffered countless humiliations and repressions by its own autocratic regime: the killing of peaceful protesters, torture, arrests, liquidation of organisations and forced emigration. All these have become new challenges for youth from Eastern European countries and inspired solidarity action of the European youth on different levels.

Representatives of civil society, including member organisations of the Belarusian National Council RADA, have experienced various types of discrimination. Hundreds and thousands of young people from Belarus were forced to leave their country for security reasons, as well as to Ukraine. Tens of thousands were arrested in Belarus, over a thousand are still in prisons and deprived of all their democratic rights and the right to live freely in their country. All these people are either political prisoners or political refugees.

The full team of the Belarusian National Youth Council "RADA" has been forced to leave the country and has not been able to return safely to Belarus for more than a year, nor has it been allowed to live in their home country. At the same time, all of us continue to stand for values of democracy and human rights.

Thousands of Belarusians living in Ukraine together with Ukrainian youth are fighting for freedom and

independence of Ukraine. Young people from all over Europe strongly condemn Russia's military aggression as well as the Belarusian regime that supports Russia in these actions.

However, more and more often we hear from political actors unfair words that the Belarusians and the Belarusian people are collaborators in the war against Ukraine, that they are aggressors and enemies of the Ukrainian people. Furthermore, we are concerned by the multiple signals that Belarussians and other third-country citizens are facing discriminatory treatment in different countries.

We firmly emphasize that unfair, unjust elections were held in Belarus in 2020. The Belarusian regime has lost its legitimacy and should not be considered representative of the Belarusian people; it is not recognized by any European or other democratic country in the World.

The European Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, taking into account that Belarusian youth is continuously showing alignment with these values and their promotion in Belarusian society, as well as the implementation of UN Resolutions 2250 and 2419 on Youth, Peace and Security, we are taking our full responsibility to promote peace, its values and the wellbeing of all young people.

The European Youth Forum and its member organizations:

1. Urge the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council of the European Union, and more generally all European politicians and parties, to refrain from associating the political regime in Belarus with the Belarusian people;
2. Express their regret at discriminatory statements by politicians and parties at national and European levels, and point out that such statements only increase the problem of nationality-based discrimination;
3. Condemn nationality-based discrimination as a flagrant violation of individual rights and as an expression of intolerance and call upon the governments of the Member States to ensure that Belarussian and other third-country citizens

escaping Belarus and Ukraine are protected against violence and any form of discrimination;

4. Call upon the governments of European countries to provide visa and humanitarian assistance to Belarusian young activists and NGO representatives;
5. Call on European Youth Forum and its Member Organisations to support the solidarity movement with Belarusian youth, in Belarus and in exile, and stand up against discrimination of young Belarusian activists and Belarusian people in the light of the Russian military aggression against Ukraine;
6. Call on the Council of Europe to join the solidarity movement with Belarusian youth forced to leave first Belarus and now Ukraine to the European Union;
7. Call on the EU bodies to join the solidarity movement with Belarusian youth forced to leave first Belarus and now Ukraine to different countries.