



CONFERENCE OF INGOs
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

**Resolution adopted on 27 January 2012
CONF/PLE(2012)RES1**

Concerning Civil Society in Belarus

The Conference of International Non Governmental Organisations (INGOs) of the Council of Europe, meeting in Strasbourg on 27 January 2012

- **recalling** its Declaration concerning the situation in Belarus following the Presidential elections on 19 December [[CONF/SC\(2010\)DEC1](#)] and its Resolutions concerning civil society in Belarus [[CONF/PLE\(2011\)RES2](#)] and [[CONF/PLE\(2011\)RES4](#)];
- **taking into account** the opinions of the Venice Commission on the Compatibility with Universal Human Rights Standards of Art. 193-1 of the Criminal Code of the Rights of Non-registered Associations of the Republic of Belarus (Opinion no. 633 / 2011) and on the Compatibility with Universal Human Rights Standards of an Official Warning Addressed by Ministry of Justice of Belarus to the Belarusian Helsinki Committee (Opinion no. 616/2011);
- **welcoming** the [PACE Recommendation 1992 \(2012\)](#) on the Situation in Belarus and expressing its readiness to collaborate as appropriate with the organs of PACE to achieve advances in democracy, human rights and the rule of law in Belarus;
- **condemns** the inhuman conditions of detention and the absence of adequate medical aid to a number of political opponents of the regime, incarcerated on political grounds;
- **strongly deplores** the further worsening of the operating environment for civil society notably the newly adopted amendments to the legislation on freedom of assembly, freedom of expression, particularly on the Internet, freedom of association, notably de facto prohibiting international support and financing of the NGOs;
- **strongly deplores**, as well, the continuous harassment of human rights NGOs in the country, that have culminated in the four and half year prison sentence to the renowned human rights defender, head of the Human Rights Centre "Viasna" and vice-president of FIDH, Ales Bialiatski, as well as confiscation of "Viasna" office property;
- **notes with deep concern** the process started by the Ministry of Justice to close down the only remaining registered national human rights organization, the Belarusian Helsinki Committee;
- **notes with concern**, as well, continuing denial of entrance to Belarus imposed on a number of representatives of human rights NGOs attempting to observe the trial of renowned human rights defender Ales Bialiatski, as well as taking part in the International Observation Mission of the Committee on International Control over the Human Rights Situation in Belarus;

- **endorses the calls** by the Council of Europe on the Belarusian authorities to release and discharge immediately and unconditionally all those convicted on political grounds - chair of the Human Rights Centre "Viasna" and vice-president of FIDH Ales Bialiatski and those sentenced for peaceful protests of 19 December 2010; and ensure unhindered access for the detainees to medical care, legal assistance and their relatives;
- **repeats its calls** for the introduction of a moratorium on executions as a first step towards the abolition of the death penalty in Belarus;
- **requests** the abolition of the prohibition of the activities of non-registered organisations and the introduction of structural improvements in the NGO legislation in accordance with international standards and with involvement of all relevant civil society organisations;
- **reaffirms** its commitment to co-operate with the independent civil society organisations and media in Belarus that are also inspired by Council of Europe fundamental values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law and confirms its support for the work of the Committee on International Control over the Human Rights Situation in Belarus as well as other initiatives of international human rights organizations;
- **welcomes** the efforts of PACE members to monitor the situation with human rights in Belarus and visit the country and calls for other Council of Europe bodies to ensure support for civil society efforts to assist Belarus in attaining European standards of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, such that Belarus can in due course be accepted as a member state.

Recommendation proposed by the Human Rights
Committee of the Conference of INGOs