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12 January 2024

Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy

Ad hoc Sub-Committee to participate in the Helsinki Dialogue - A democratic future for Belarus

Synopsis

The **ad hoc Sub-Committee to participate in the Helsinki Dialogue - A democratic future for Belarus** (of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy), meeting in Helsinki on 11 and 12 January 2024, with the participation Ms Despina Chatzivassiliou-Tsovilis, Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly, as regards:

- **Election of the Chairperson of the ad hoc Sub-Committee:** elected, by acclamation, Mr Kimmo Kiljunen (Finland, SOC);
- **Participation in the Conference “Helsinki Dialogue - A democratic future for Belarus”:** participated in the Conference, co-organised by the Parliamentary Assembly and the delegation of Finland to the Parliamentary Assembly, during which:
 - it heard interventions by:
 - Sviatlana TSIKHANOUSKAYA, Head of the United Transitional Cabinet, Leader of the Belarusian democratic forces
 - Elina VALTONEN, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland
 - Kimmo KILJUNEN, Rapporteur of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy on “A democratic future for Belarus” and Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Finnish Parliament
 - Despina CHATZIVASSILIOU-TSOVILIS, Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
 - it participated in panel discussions on “Belarus in the contemporary geopolitical context” (moderator: Kimmo KILJUNEN), “Belarusian national identity: culture, history and language” (moderator: Jussi NIEMELÄINEN), “Political prisoners” (moderator: Thórhildur Sunna ÆVARSDÓTTIR, Iceland, SOC), “Strengthening and supporting Belarusian democratic forces” (moderator: Despina CHATZIVASSILIOU-TSOVILIS), “Electoral matters in Belarus” (moderator: Marietta KARAMANLI, France, SOC), and “A representative body of the Belarusian people” (moderator: George PAPANDREOU, Greece, SOC), heard interventions by the following panelists (in speaking order):
 - Valery KAVALEUSKI, United Transitional Cabinet, Deputy Head and Representative for Foreign Affairs
 - Bogdan KLICH (Poland, EPP/CD), Member of the ad hoc Sub-Committee
 - Vlad KOBETS, Executive Director, International Strategic Action Network for Security (iSANS)
 - Arkady MOSHES, Programme Director, Finnish Institute for International Affairs
 - Hanna LIUBAKOVA, Independent Journalist
 - Franak VIACORKA, Office of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, Chief Advisor
 - Paul GALLES (Luxembourg, EPP/CD), Rapporteur of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons on “Addressing the specific challenges faced by the Belarusians in exile”
 - Artur MICHALSKI, Special Representative of the Polish Foreign Ministry for Cooperation with Democratic Forces of Belarus and former Polish Ambassador to Belarus

- Pavel BARKOUSKI, United Transitional Cabinet, Deputy Representative for National Revival
 - Toni STENSTRÖM, Author
 - Tatsiana KHOMICH, Coordination Council, sister of Maria Kalesnikava, political prisoner and laureate of the Vaclav Havel Human Rights Prize
 - Christina JOHANNESSON, Ambassador of Sweden to the Eastern Partnership and Swedish representative to the Belarusian democratic forces
 - Pavel SAPELKA, Viasna Human Rights Centre
 - Vladzimir ASTAPENKA, Deputy Head of The National Anti-Crisis Management
 - Marko KOPLIMAA, Estonian Special Representative for the Democratic Forces of Belarus
 - Ryhor NIZHNIKAU, Senior Research Fellow, Finnish Institute for International Affairs
 - Natalia BELIKOVA, Board Member, Belarus in Focus, Press Club Belarus
 - Andrei YAHORAU, Coordination Council
 - Anatol LIABEDZKA, Inter-Party Alliance, Representative for Constitutional Reform and Parliamentary Cooperation in the Office of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya
 - Pavel LIBER, Golos platform
 - Oliver KASK, Member of the Venice Commission
 - Lena ZHIVOGLOD, Coordination Council
 - Anna DENIS, Democracy and Governance Advisor, International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)
 - Stewart DICKSON, Spokesperson on observation of local and regional elections of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and Chairperson of the Council for Democratic Elections of the Venice Commission
- it heard concluding remarks by Kimmo KILJUNEN and Valery KAVALEUSKI.

Sonia Sirtori, John Dorber