

**ASBur Adhoc-Lux (2024) CB 01**

11 June 2024

**To the members of the Ad hoc Committee of the Bureau**

**Synopsis**

**of the meeting held in Luxembourg, on 6 and 7 June 2024**

**The role of national parliaments in addressing the challenges faced by the Belarusians in exile**

- **The Ad hoc Committee of the Bureau**, meeting in Luxembourg, **on Thursday 6 June, from 13:00 to 17:30**, as regards:
  - **Opening session** : heard a statement by Mr Fernand Etgen, Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg, Mr Xavier Bettel, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg, Mr Theodoros Rousopoulos, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Mr Paul Galles (Luxembourg, EPP/CD), member of the PACE Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons and rapporteur on “Addressing the specific challenges faced by the Belarusians in exile, and Ms Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, Leader of the Belarus democratic forces;
  - **Grand témoin**: heard a statement by Mr Sasha Filipenko, writer;
  - **Legal entry and stay** : participated in a panel discussion on how legal entry and stay could be facilitated in Council of Europe member States for Belarusians in exile who fled the Lukashenka regime, moderated by Mr Paul Galles (Luxembourg, EPP/CD), member of the PACE Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons and rapporteur on “Addressing the specific challenges faced by the Belarusians in exile”, with the participation of Mr Vladzimir Astapenka, Head of the Mission of Democratic Belarus in Brussels, Ms Bogdana Sybikowska, DG HOME, International Affairs Unit, Desk Officer for Belarus, and Mr David Best, Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees;
  - **Threats to freedom of movement and denial of consular services**: participated in a panel discussion on the new passport prepared by the Belarus democratic forces, and how national parliaments can alleviate the denial of consular services for Belarus citizens , moderated by Ms Lesia Vasylenko (Ukraine, ALDE), member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, with the participation of Mr Valery Kavaleuski, Deputy Head and Representative for Foreign Affairs to the United Transitional Cabinet of Belarus, Ms Alexandra Mamaeva, Belarus People’s Embassy in Slovenia, and Ambassador Violaine de Villemeur, Special Envoy for Belarus, Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, France;
  - **Reprisals at home**: participated in a panel discussion on security threats posed to relatives who stayed in Belarus and what role national parliaments can play to support political prisoners’ relatives in exile, moderated by Ms Octavie Modert (Luxembourg, EPP/CD), member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, with the participation of Mr Andrei Strizhak, BYSOL, Ms Tatsiana Kovalyonok, Politzek Acting General Manager, and Mr Ken McBain, Libereco;
- **The Ad hoc Committee of the Bureau**, meeting in Luxembourg, **on Friday 7 June 2024, from 9:15 to 14:15**, as regards:
  - **Access to education**: participated in a panel discussion on the best way to integrate Belarusian children in the host countries’ school systems and on promoting Belarus academia in exile in Council of Europe member States, moderated by Professor Elena Korosteleva, Professor of Politics and Global Sustainable Development, Director of the Institute for Global Sustainable Development, Warwick University, with the participation of Ms Tatiana Shchytsova, Adviser on Education and Science, Office of Sviatlana

Tsikhanouskaya, Ms Tamara Matskevich, Belarusian School Society and Mr Villano Qiriazzi, Head of Education Department, Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity;

- **Pursuing a professional career in exile:** participated in a panel discussion on strategies to promote Belarus businesses in exile and better integrate Belarusians in the local labour market, moderated by Ms Larysa Bilozir (Ukraine, ALDE), member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, with the participation of Dr Alexander Maslov, entrepreneur, venture investor, Ms Anna Matsiyenskaya, Legal Advisor and Chair of the Supervisory Board Association of Belarussian Business Abroad, Ms Maria Kolesava-Hudzilina, President of the Belarusian Association of Human Rights Lawyers and Ms Alexandra Pushkina, Director, Member of the Board, Zerkalo;
- **Preserving and promoting Belarusian cultural identity:** participated in a panel discussion on ways national parliaments can play a constructive role in promoting and disseminating the Belarusian cultural identity in the host countries, moderated by Mr Kimmo Kiljunen (Finland, SOC), member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, with the participation of Ms Alina Koushyk, Representative on National Revival, United Transitional Cabinet, Ms Daniella Kaliada, Creative Director and Co-Founder, Be Free Trust and Ms Yael Ohana, Programme Manager - Education, Training & Cooperation, Youth Department, Council of Europe;
- **Final statement:** heard a statement by Ms Natalia Kaliada, Co-Founding and Artistic Director of the Belarus Free Theatre;
- **Concluding remarks and next steps:** heard a statement by Ms Anaïs Marin, UN Special Rapporteur on Belarus, by Mr Anatoli Liabedzka, Advisor for the Constitutional Reform and Parliamentary Cooperation, and by Mr Paul Galles.

Tatiana Termacic

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cc: Secretary General of the Assembly  
Director and all staff of the Secretariat of the Assembly  
Secretaries of National Delegations and of Political Groups of the Assembly  
Secretaries of observer and partner for democracy delegations  
Secretary General of the Congress  
Secretary to the Committee of Ministers  
Directors General  
Director of the Private Office of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe  
Director of the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights  
Director of Communication  
Permanent Representations to the Council of Europe