

Nikos Christodoulides, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Cyprus

Brussels, 18 September 2020

Appeal to the government of the Republic of Cyprus on the adoption of sanctions against the perpetrators of election fraud, violence and repression in Belarus ahead of the EU Foreign Affairs Council on 21 September

On 17 September, the European Parliament adopted [Resolution 2020/2779\(RSP\)](#) on the situation in Belarus by an overwhelming margin of 574 votes in favour, to 37 against. In approving this Resolution, Members of the European Parliament reaffirmed their solidarity with the Belarusian people in their struggle to uphold their most fundamental rights and freedoms - including the right to choose their leaders and freedom of peaceful assembly - and to defend themselves against the repressive tactics employed by the state law enforcement agencies.

The Resolution also expressed the European Parliament's strong support for the adoption of sanctions against individuals responsible for the falsification of the 9 August presidential election and the ensuing repression, and called for the European Council to implement these without delay.

In view of this emphatic endorsement by the European Parliament of EU sanctions against the perpetrators of the ongoing human rights emergency in Belarus - including by a majority of Cypriot MEPs - we are greatly concerned by media reports that the government of the Republic of Cyprus is blocking the implementation of these sanctions until sanctions are also adopted against officials in Turkey.

Of course, as the European Parliament itself highlighted in its [Resolution 2020/2774\(RSP\)](#), also adopted on 17 September, any violation of the sovereign rights of the Republic of Cyprus in its Exclusive Economic Zone cannot and will not be tolerated, and appropriate measures should be taken against Turkey should it continue to engage in illegal activities in the Eastern Mediterranean. Yet the question of the ongoing dispute between Cyprus and Turkey and that of the Belarusian people's fight for freedom are entirely separate, and should be treated as such when it comes to formulating the European Union's response to both situations.

With this in mind, we urge the Cypriot government to reconsider its decision to delay the adoption of sanctions against individuals in the Belarusian regime, pending the implementation of sanctions against Turkey. After all, just as Cyprus is seeking to defend its sovereignty, so too are the Belarusian people seeking to reclaim theirs.

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