



Беларуская нацыянальная платформа

Форум грамадзянскай супольнасці
УСХОДНЯГА ПАРТНЁРСТВА

Minsk, August 4, 2017

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus
Committee of State Control of the Republic of Belarus
General Prosecutor's office of the Republic of Belarus**

**Statement of the Coordination Committee of the Belarusian National Platform
of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum**

In connection with the criminal prosecution of the leaders of the Belarusian independent trade unions

On the morning of August 2, 2017, officers of the Financial Investigation Department of the State Control Committee of the Republic of Belarus under prosecuted criminal case conducted searches in the Minsk office of the Belarusian Trade Union of Radio Electronics Workers (REP) and the Soligorsk office of the Belarusian Independent Trade Union and detentions of REP Trade Union leaders Henadz Fiadynich and Ihar Komlik.

The Coordination Committee of the Belarusian National Platform of the EaP Civil Society Forum considers this criminal prosecution as politically motivated actions of the Belarusian authorities with the aim of exerting pressure on the leadership and members of independent trade union organizations, discrediting the leaders of the trade union movement in the eyes of the general public and preventing possible protest actions in the fall of 2017 related to worsen economic situation of citizens of the country and further practicing the Decree No. 3 "On the prevention of social parasitism", which contradicts Constitution of the Republic of Belarus.

The role of independent democratic trade unions is very important for protecting social and economic rights of citizens, for representing the interests of Belarusian workers in a dialogue with social partners - state bodies and organizations of employers. The Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions is a member of the Belarusian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, therefore we view persecution of our colleagues as pressure on democratic organizations of civil society in general.

For the activities of civil society organizations, especially those that are critical of the political course of the country's leadership, extremely unfavorable legal and material conditions have been created in the last 15 years of Belarus. Many civil society organizations, independent trade unions, political parties against their own will actually deprived of the opportunity to operate in the legal field of Belarus, and then they are eventually persecuted. It is quite easy to solve this problem by announcing political liberalization in the country, canceling

the permitting system for registration of projects financed by international organizations, removing article 193.1 (criminal responsibility for organizing and participating in the activities of unregistered organizations) from the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus and abandoning the practice of selective registration and unjustified liquidation of civil society actors.

Assessing the actions of the authorities against the leaders of independent trade unions as another demonstration of force, refusal to engage in dialogue with the Belarusian society, we urge the relevant officials of the Republic of Belarus to urgently terminate groundless criminal prosecutions, prevent an increase of the number of political prisoners, and politically motivated reprisals against the civil society actors of Belarus, refrain from other actions damaging the reputation of the Republic of Belarus in the international arena.

We fully share and support earlier statements made on this issue by civil society actors in our country, in particular the joint statement of Belarusian human rights organizations and the statement of the Council of the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions. We call on the public organizations and movements of the Republic of Belarus, the Eastern Partnership countries and the European Union not to stand by and express their solidarity support to our colleagues.

BNP EaP CSF Coordination Committee

The Belarusian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum was founded in July 2010, it unites over 80 organizations and initiatives of various fields on the basis of pro-European values.