



## **EaP CSF Steering Committee Statement on the sentencing of political prisoner, philosopher and civil society leader Uladzimir Matskevich**

5 July 2022, Brussels

On 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2022, Uladzimir Matskevich, philosopher and civil society leader, was sentenced to 5 years of reinforced regime imprisonment by the Minsk Regional Court in a politically motivated trial. Mr Matskevich was detained on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2021 and declared a political prisoner on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2021. This unjust and politically motivated imprisonment and sentencing is yet another move by the Belarusian authorities to intensify human rights abuses, political persecutions and to suffocate dissent and freedom of speech. This extremely concerning situation calls for an urgent, structured and sustained response from all stakeholders.

Uladzimir Matskevich has been for years one of the most prominent voices in Belarusian civil society. Through his books, lectures, articles and actions, he has contributed to the development of Belarusian civil society and shaped Belarusian philosophical and humanitarian thought. In the early stages of the Eastern Partnership policy, Mr Matskevich founded the EaP CSF Belarusian National Platform and participated in the creation of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum. He is the author of the formula “Think Belarus”, the founder of the Agency of Humanitarian technologies, the first Head of the Council of the international consortium “EuroBelarus” and the founder of the “Flying University” (Лятучы ўніверсітэт).

Without any end in sight to the spiral of violence Belarusian authorities are caught in, there will only be further destruction. The Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum calls on:

### **The Belarusian authorities:**

- To release **Uladzimir Matskevich** immediately, together with all unlawfully detained civil society activists, human rights defenders, journalists and students; after release, Mr Matskevich and all others should be protected from torture, any inhuman or degrading treatment, and should have unconditional access to justice, legal and medical assistance.

### **The European Union and Member states:**

- to pay continued, structured, public and political attention to the sentence and detention of Uladzimir Matskevich and the situation of thousands of political prisoners in Belarus;



- to keep following the situation of repressed Belarusian journalists, activists and civil society representatives who are facing increasing pressure and hostilities at the hands of the regime;
- to continue supporting Belarusian free media and exiled civil society, so that they can continue to exercise their watchdog function to the extent that it remains possible, and to shed light on Mr Matskevich's case and others.

**To the press, human rights activists and civil society:**

- To continue raising the issue of Uladzimir Matskevich's imprisonment. A spotlight should be kept on his case and the conditions of his internment must not be forgotten.

**Members of the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil  
Society Forum**