

*Brussels, 13 October 2020*

## **Joint statement of the Belarusian National Platform and Steering Committee of the EaP CSF on the illegal arrests of its members, and members of the Coordination Council initiated by Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya**

Following the illegal arrests of more than 600 peaceful protesters and civil society activists during the period of 9-11 October 2020 and the resumption of the use of excessive violence and unlawful detentions comparable to that in the post-election days of 9-11 August, the Belarusian National Platform and Steering Committee of the EaP CSF **strongly condemn** the unjustified detentions of their members, and of members of the main body of the Coordination Council initiated by Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya:

- **Svetlana Gatalskaya**, Member of the Coordinating Committee of the Belarusian National Platform of the EaP CSF, and a member of the Fem Group of the Coordination Council. Svetlana was detained by police at home on 10 October.

- **Julia Mickiewicz**, Member of the EaP CSF, Project Manager at the “ABF BY” NGO, and a member of the Fem Group of the Coordination Council was abducted by unidentified people on the street near her office on 9 October.

- **Marina Dubina**, Member of the EaP CSF, Director of the “Ecohome” NGO, and human rights defender, was detained by unknown persons in uniform, without identification marks, who used tear gas on her and forced her into a car.

- **Uladzimir Kavalkin**, member of the EaP CSF, Project Manager and Analyst at the “SYMPA/BYPART” NGO, and founder of the petitions.by and «Копит улада» (“Price of Government”) websites. He was detained on 11 October and sentenced to 15 days of imprisonment on 12 October.

- **Olga Shparaga**, co-founder of the independent European College “Liberal Arts” in Minsk, researcher, and member of the Fem group of the Coordinating Council.

In light of this highly alarming situation, the Belarusian National Platform and Steering Committee of the EaP CSF call on **the Belarusian authorities** to:

- Immediately release all political prisoners, and all detained and abducted participants in peaceful protests, including our colleagues **Svetlana Gatalskaya, Julia Mickiewicz, Marina Dubina, Uladzimir Kavalkin, Olga Shparaga**;
- End the violence and repression by law enforcement agencies and bring the perpetrators to justice;
- Invalidate the results of the election of the President of the Republic of Belarus on 9 August 2020 due to widespread violations and falsifications;

- Begin a meaningful dialogue with Sviatlana Tikhanouskaya, including the appointed representatives of the Coordination Council.

The Belarusian National Platform and Steering Committee of the EaP CSF also call on **the EU and the EU Member States** to:

- Facilitate the release from prison of the EaP CSF members and all members of the Coordination Council;
- Assist in ensuring the end of violence by law enforcement agencies;
- Help initiate dialogue between the incumbent government of the Republic of Belarus and Sviatlana Tikhanouskaya, including the appointed representatives of the Coordination Council;
- Continue expressing solidarity with the Belarusian population and providing support to the population, while at the same time freezing all support to the incumbent government.

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

*Zaur Akbar, Youth Club Public Union, Azerbaijan*

*Olga Chyzhova, Digital Communication Network, Estonia*

*Ina Coseru, National Environmental Center, Moldova*

*Lousineh Hakobyan, Europe in Law Association, Armenia*

*Mikayel Hovhannisyan, Eurasia Partnership Foundation, Armenia*

*Shahla Ismayil, Women's Association for Rational Development (WARD), Azerbaijan*

*Maksym Koriavets, Polissya Foundation for International and Regional Studies, Ukraine*

*Mikalai Kvantaliani, Association "New Group", Belarus*

*Natia Kuprashvili, Journalism Resource Center, Georgia*

*Adrian Lupusor, Expert-Grup, Moldova*

*Tatiana Marian, National Trade Union Confederation of Moldova*

*Sofia Strive, ForumCiv, Sweden*

*Yurii Vdovenko, Center for Cross-Border Cooperation, Ukraine*