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**Oleg Tulea**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Moldova  
**Dmytro Kuleba**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ukraine

*Brussels, 8 September 2020*

## **Statement of the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum on the illegal detention of members of the EaP CSF, Andrei Yahorau and Irina Sukhy**

The Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF) strongly condemns the **unjustified and illegal detention** in Minsk of our colleagues, **Andrei Yahorau** and **Irina Sukhy** by plainclothes law enforcement agents in the absence of both identification marks and probable cause.

**Andrei Yahorau**, a political scientist and civic activist currently serving as Co-Chair of the Coordinating Committee of the Belarusian National Platform of the EaP CSF, and a member of the Coordination Council initiated by Sviatlana Tikhanouskaya, was abducted on the street by unidentified people on his way to participate in a peaceful protest on 6 September. He remains in detention.

**Irina Sukhy**, Chair of the “Green Network” board, and a representative of the “Ecohome” NGO, advocates for a sustainable, environmentally-balanced, and nuclear-free future for Belarus. She was abducted from her home by plainclothes law enforcement officers on the night of 5 September. An illegal search was carried out in her apartment and equipment was seized by representatives of law enforcement agencies who refused to identify themselves and produce the relevant authorisation for inspecting the apartment. During the search, only Irina’s 93-year old mother was present; her daughters were denied entry during the examination. Ms. Sukhy remains in detention, as the court hearing which took place on 7 September could not establish her participation in the mass protest on 3 September in Minsk – the reason for her arrest. A new court hearing will take place in the coming days.

Four weeks after the falsified presidential elections in Belarus, the widespread police brutality and violence by the authorities continue. More than 600 people were detained on 6 September, with no signs of the repression and arbitrary arrests coming to an end.

In light of this highly alarming situation, the Steering Committee of the EaP CSF calls on Belarusian authorities to:

- Release all political prisoners, and all those detained and abducted during peaceful protests, including our colleagues, immediately;
- End 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 numerous violations and falsifications;
- Begin meaningful dialogue between the illegitimate incumbent government of the Republic of Belarus, and Sviatlana Tikhanouskaya and her appointed representatives, to arrange a peaceful transfer of power.

We call on the international community to stand in solidarity with the Belarusian people, and to help them to ensure the respect for human rights and the rule of law in the country, as well as the release of all those unlawfully detained.

***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*