

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002303/24
to the Commission
Diana Riba i Giner (Verts/ALE)
(29 October 2024)**

Subject: The situation of Belarusian citizens who have been deprived of their nationality

In recent years, there has been a decline in respect for human rights in Belarusian territory. The government of Aliaksandr Lukashenka has introduced legislative changes aimed at stripping Belarusian nationals living abroad of their citizenship if they participate in activities it deems 'extremist'. Additionally, to control political dissent, the Belarusian regime has altered the procedures for renewing documentation for its citizens residing abroad, now requiring them to travel to Belarus for these renewals. According to Spain's National Statistics Institute, this affects over 6 000 Belarusian residents in Spain. In response to a request from the Republican group in Spain's Congress of Deputies, the Spanish Government indicated a year ago that this issue was being discussed by the Commission and the Council, in order to coordinate actions among the Member States.

What is the Commission's opinion on the situation of Belarusian citizens living abroad who have been deprived of their nationality or are unable to renew their documentation?

Submitted: 29.10.2024

**Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(7 January 2025)**

The EU continues to follow closely the situation in Belarus and strongly condemns actions taken by the regime against Belarusians in exile.

The EU remains committed to ensuring that Belarusian residents in the EU have access to identity and travel documents and, where necessary, have avenues of regularising their stay despite not having access to consular services.

The Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) continue promoting exchanges with Member States on best practices at national level in order to find solutions for Belarusian citizens in the EU.

Third-country nationals staying in the EU, who cannot get a passport from their country of origin, should primarily seek to get a travel document from the Member State they are resident in ⁽¹⁾.

Similarly, it is for each Member State, having due regard to international law, to lay down the conditions for acquisition and loss of nationality and that in situations covered by EU law, the national rules concerned must have due regard to the latter ⁽²⁾.

The EU remains committed to continue supporting people-to-people contacts, notably by supporting mobility of Belarusian youth and professionals, in line with the principles included in the Council Conclusions of 2020 ⁽³⁾ and 2024 ⁽⁴⁾.

The EEAS and the Commission, together with the European Parliament, hosted Belarus Days from 9 to 13 December 2024 in Brussels to highlight the EU's continued support for the democratic aspirations of the Belarusian people. Over 100 representatives of the Belarusian diaspora attended.

⁽¹⁾ Member States issue passports and other identity documents to third-country nationals that cannot acquire those from their own government according to national law.

⁽²⁾ See judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union in Cases *Micheletti and Others v Delegación del Gobierno en Cantabria*, C-369/90, ECLI:EU:C:1992:295; *Kaur*, C-192/99, ECLI:EU:C:2001:106, para. 19; *Rottmann*, C-135/08, ECLI:EU:C:2010:104, para. 39; *Tjebbes and Others*, C-221/17, ECLI:EU:C:2019:189, para. 30; *V.M.A.*, C-490/20, ECLI:EU:C:2021:1008, para. 38; *Wiener Landesregierung*, C-118/20, ECLI:EU:C:2022:34, para. 37.

⁽³⁾ Council conclusions on Belarus as adopted by the Council (Foreign Affairs) on 12 October 2020, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/46076/council-conclusions-on-belarus.pdf>

⁽⁴⁾ Council conclusions on Belarus as approved by the Council (Foreign Affairs) on 19 February 2024, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6737-2024-INIT/en/pdf>