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Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas
on behalf of the European Commission
(21.1.2026)

In line with the Council conclusions of 19 February 2024¹ and 12 October 2020², the EU's policy towards Belarus aims to apply pressure on the Belarusian authorities while supporting the people of Belarus and their democratic aspirations.

The EU welcomes the recent releases of political prisoners, following diplomatic engagement by the United States. Nevertheless, more than 1 100 political prisoners remain arbitrarily detained, repression continues, and no substantial improvement in the overall human rights situation can be observed.

Since August 2020, the EU has adopted several rounds of restrictive measures against Belarus³ in response to the repression of civil society and democratic opposition, misconduct of the electoral process, the incitement and organisation of illegal border crossings, human rights violations, the diverting of a passenger flight, hybrid activities against Member States and the regime's involvement in Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Decisions regarding restrictive measures rest solely with the Council, by the unanimity of Member States.

The EU will remain steadfast in its support for a democratic Belarus. The EU will continue to condemn the illegal actions of the regime and to call for the release of all political prisoners and end to repression.

¹ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6737-2024-INIT/en/pdf>.

² <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/46076/council-conclusions-on-belarus.pdf>.

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32025D1471>.