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Honourable Members,

Thank you for your letter of 26 October on the situation in Belarus and its impact on further EU financial assistance.

Let me first reassure you that the European Commission continues to follow very closely the developments in Belarus. Following the adoption of the Council conclusions on 12 October, we are in the process of reviewing EU relations with Belarus. This includes financial assistance, which will have to be recalibrated to ensure it benefits the population at large by directing it to the maximum extent possible away from central authorities and towards non-state, local and regional actors. Cooperation with central authorities will continue only where necessary to ensure that the benefits reach the people of Belarus or in areas of clear EU interest such as nuclear safety. It is important to step up our assistance to the civil society, independent media and the private sector, notably small and medium-sized enterprises.

Regarding the assistance package announced by President von der Leyen, I am pleased to inform you that the funds to assist victims of repression and to support independent media (EUR 2.7 million and EUR 1 million respectively) are already deployed on the ground. In addition, within this package we are also preparing a new action which would provide sustained support to civil society, independent media, youth and education, as well as to small and medium-sized enterprises.

The perseverance of the Belarusian people and their commitment to democracy is impressive. Current developments in the country require close coordination in demonstrating our solidarity with its people as well as continued engagement and support. I am confident that our support to the civil society and calls for an inclusive national dialogue can lead to a peaceful and sustainable solution out of the crisis. I am looking forward to our cooperation in making this happen.

Yours sincerely,



Olivér Várhelyi

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