

Brussels, 04/12/2020
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To all MEPs signatory to the letter on a Donor's conference for democratic Belarus

Dear Members of the European Parliament,

I would like to thank you for your letter of 15 October recalling the European Parliament's proposal to the EU institutions to organize a donor conference on Belarus.

The EU has continuously expressed its support to the democratic aspirations of Belarusian people and has pledged to increase its support.

As you know, in response to the developments in Belarus following the 9 August falsified elections, the European Council decided to review the EU's relations with Belarus. As part of this review, it was decided to recalibrate bilateral financial EU assistance to Belarus in order to ensure it benefits the population at large notably by directing it to the maximum possible extent away from central authorities and towards non-state, local and regional actors, including through cross-border cooperation programmes. In view of this decision, the European Investment Bank (EIB) has also reviewed its operations in Belarus and EU Member States coordinate their positions accordingly within the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) Board of Directors.

At the same time, the EU has immediately made available additional financial resources for victims of violence, civil society organisations and independent media. The EU is working on measures to provide further urgent and medium-term support to Belarusian civil society, including youth, persons in vulnerable situations and independent media, as well as to the private and health sectors.

I have taken good note and welcome the European Parliament's recommendation of 21 October 2020, among others, to develop a comprehensive programme for Belarus after the new presidential elections are held and to organise a donors' conference for democratic Belarus.

In line with the 12 October 2020 Council Conclusions on Belarus, the EU would be ready to support a peaceful democratic transition in Belarus. Should such a transition take place, and upon the request by the Belarusian government, the EU will use a variety of instruments, in line with the Eastern Partnership policy, including the launch of a comprehensive plan of economic support for democratic Belarus.

I would like to reassure you that EU institutions are working together with international financial institutions to prepare such a plan. For the moment, due the current situation in Belarus, we consider it premature to organize a donor conference, as the pre-conditions for launching such a plan are not yet in place.

We will continue to follow the developments in Belarus very closely and adjust our actions accordingly.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and lines, positioned above the name Josep Borrell Fontelles.

Josep Borrell Fontelles