

## STATEMENT

of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia

on the presidential election in Belarus

The Saeima of the Republic of Latvia,

*having observed* that the Belarusian presidential election on 9 August 2020 did not conform to the international commitments of Belarus and internationally recognised standards of democracy and the rule of law and was not free and fair;

*expressing* concern about the repressions and violence against representatives of civil society and independent mass media before, during, and after the presidential election in Belarus;

*emphasising* that the right to participate in free elections is a fundamental value of democracy and that the freedom of speech and assembly is a basic human right;

*emphasising* that current actions of the Belarusian authorities violate internationally recognised human rights norms and principles of democracy;

*asserting* that social dialogue and reforms will improve the development of Belarus by promoting good neighbourly relations in our region and re-establishing successful relations with the European Union,

*calls* on the Belarusian authorities to immediately discontinue the use of force and persecution; release all political prisoners and persons who were illegally detained in the last few days; rehabilitate the released political prisoners and fully restore their civil and political rights; and ensure adherence to democratic principles, human rights, and fundamental rights according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international and regional human rights instruments ratified by Belarus;

*encourages* the Belarusian government to start immediate dialogue with the opposition and civil society to prevent further violence and introduce changes that the people of Belarus hold desirable and necessary;

*urges* to hold a new presidential election in line with internationally recognised standards, while providing the opposition with equal access to all state-controlled mass media and allowing the opposition to participate in the election on equal footing; to ensure fair and genuine opportunities for all candidates to engage in pre-election campaigns; to ensure the presence of international observers, as well as equal representation of candidates' supporters at all levels of electoral committees;

*calls* on the government of the Republic of Latvia to support the introduction of European Union sanctions against the Belarusian officials responsible for the violations of human rights and tampering with election results;

*calls* on the government of the Republic of Latvia and institutions of the European Union to provide support to the Belarusian society, including financial support aimed at the development of Belarusian civil society and independent mass media;

*reaffirms* its constant support for the sovereignty of Belarus, well-being and fundamental rights of the Belarusian people.