

## **Suggestions for German Politics and Diplomacy**

### **What should be done by politics, diplomacy and civil society in Germany / EU to support the democratic movement in Belarus?**

Paper compiled by civic actors for the Round Table  
on Tue, 15 Sept 2020 (online)

#### **=> Social Dimension**

1. Humanitarian aid both for the society as a whole and particular target groups;
2. Medical aid in Germany for repression/torture victims: governmental funds and/or private sponsors, support for visa and transportation (there is current experience in Poland, Latvia, Czech Republic);
3. Psychological aid/trauma therapy for victims of repression, professional exchange with experts in the field from Ukraine;
4. Visa facilitation in obtaining EU and national visa, especially for students and citizens who have suffered repression; assistance with politically motivated departure from the country. If necessary, utilizing German visa centres in the regions of Belarus/visa issuance via visa centres based in other countries (Baltic States, Ukraine, Russia), participation in the Visegrad Group's initiative for visa-free travel in the EU;
5. Most urgent elements of immediate aid are currently: support for human rights organisations, independent media, psychological counselling/support for women, knowledge transfer on digital security, providing technical equipment;
6. Special support for human rights organisations in Belarus, e.g. by documentation of evidence of torture etc. Torture of underage persons is an important area here; it will possibly require contacts on the ground via UNICEF;
7. Cooperation with independent trade unions (possibly using the expertise of Friedrich Ebert Foundation) and lawyers' associations: financial aid (where possible) and/or expressions of solidarity;
8. Flexible funding of project work with Belarus/indirect funding via international partners. Removing the obstacles for bank transfers within the EU (based, i.e. on the legal framework against funding of terrorism);
9. Increasing existing funding programs in Germany and at the EU level for different population groups (social area, education, culture etc.);
10. Safeguarding the EU aid package (50 million for Corona measures + 3 million for civil society) to ensure that the funds cannot be misappropriated/misused by the government;
11. Special programs to support forcibly deregistered/repressed students (special grants by DAAD);
12. Fast funding for tangibly expanding youth and professional exchange with Belarus, ideally in connection with Ukraine and further Eastern Partnership countries as well as establishing an institutional framework if possible;
13. Fostering German/international networks in the regions of Belarus;
14. Financial aid/public visibility for Belarusian diaspora in Germany.

## **Suggestions for German Politics and Diplomacy**

### **=> Political Dimension**

1. Increasing pressure on Belarusian authorities with regards to torture/murders/violence/repression, demand to free political prisoners and end repression;
2. Establishing an international commission to investigate the murders and torture of Belarusian citizens (via UN Human Rights Council and OSCE's Moscow Mechanism) to supplement the work of PACE;
3. Demanding free and democratic new elections under international observation (OSCE/ODIHR) and start of a dialogue with society to stop the violence;
4. Supporting the demands of the Belarusian Coordination Council to conduct democratic changes;
5. For the dialogue between state and society on the transfer of power and/or constitutional reform => offering participation of UN/OSCE and demanding participation of all important civic and political actors in such dialogue (not only pro-state structures or state-affiliated NGOs/parties);
6. Clarification of the way the non-recognition of the election results can be practically implemented after Lukashenka's inauguration in September (international treaties, assignments etc. that could be signed by Lukashenka). Making it clear to Russia that agreements on deepening of the integration within the Union State will not be accepted internationally due to the lack of Lukashenka's legitimacy;
7. Germany must play a much stronger role in coordination on Belarus during its EU Council presidency. A closer cooperation between Germany and the Baltic States/Poland/Czech Republic on Belarus would be sensible (i.e. at parliamentary /governmental levels);
8. Extending the capacity of the German Embassy to Belarus/Federal Foreign Office, if possible, via the position of Special Envoy for Belarus at the Foreign Office;
9. Imposing an embargo on weapons and equipment that can be used against protesters in Belarus by prosecution authorities, including the equipment allowing to spy on people or to follow them (if not already happened);
10. Freezing the bilateral cooperation between Belarusian and German Ministries of the Interior/Ministries of Defence/Security Authorities;
11. Cancellation or boycott of the Ice-Hockey World Cup 2021 in Belarus;
12. Offering the prospect of comprehensive economic aid for Belarus in the 'post-Lukashenka' period and planning for such aid;
13. Sanctions against Lukashenka as well as members of government, security authorities and further state structures responsible for the election fraud and violence.

## Suggestions for German Politics and Diplomacy

### => Informational Dimension

1. Keeping Belarus and what happens in the country on the agenda for the German and European public and policy;
2. Continued solidarity action at all levels. E.g. members of Parliament become individual patrons of persons who suffer repression;
3. Demanding free media and online coverage in/from Belarus, release of detained Belarusian and international journalists and that accreditation is granted to foreign journalists;
4. Financial aid for translation of reports/analytical papers from Belarus and by Belarusian authors and journalists;
5. Establishing/funding of an information project/information platform on Belarus in German (similar to Dekóder or 'Ukraine-Verstehen');
6. Seeking and directly asking for expertise from Belarus/Belarusian diaspora in Germany if needed, expanding the online list of experts (e.g. belarusexperts.info).

### => What to avoid (Do no harm)?

1. Not giving up on the principles of international law and human rights;
2. Starting no initiatives without consulting with recognised representatives of the democratic movement in Belarus in advance;
3. No confrontation between the EU and Russia, as long as there is no violence, violations of the international law/human rights or Belarus' sovereignty that would require a reaction;
4. No funding of events that can be misused for propaganda purposes and pictured as payments for political positions/actions.

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