



The European Writers' Council vehemently condemns the massive violations of free speech and human rights in Belarus

The European Writers' Council is highly concerned about the violent and systematic oppression of peaceful protests against the official results of the presidential elections and against the autocratic President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko. The EWC fully supports the appeal of its member organisation, the Union of Belarusian Writers (UBW), for solidarity, freedom of expression and transparent and democratic new elections.

Brussels, 17 August 2020 The European Writers' Council and its Board are deeply alarmed by the current events in Belarus after presidential elections tainted by suspicions of massive manipulation. Belarus is undergoing a terrible wave of repression and indiscriminate attacks on peaceful demonstrators protesting against police abuse and demanding the release of all unjustly held prisoners, the organisation of transparent and democratic new elections and the safeguarding of human rights and freedom of speech. Journalists and bloggers are being threatened, attacked and arrested; news websites have been blocked, and free access to information is being suppressed.

“We are in a continuous contact with our EWC member, The Union of Belarusian Writers, and the news we are receiving is deeply disturbing and depressing,” says EWC President, Nina George. “Our independent sources have sent us reports of brutal police violence in the streets and of even worse abuse in prisons, including psychological torture, indiscriminate beatings and rape. This violence is directed against all those Belarusians who are exercising their rights of freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and demanding the implementation of truly democratic principles in their country. We urge the governments of the European Union not to stand by in silence, but to bring strong pressure to bear on the autocratic regime of Alyaksandr Lukashenka [Alexander Lukashenko], to put an end to this violence and uphold the values on which the European Union is based,” George urges.

The EWC strongly supports the attached call for solidarity with Belarus, released by its Belarusian member association UBW, a writers' association firmly committed to the principles of the UN Charter on Human Rights. The EWC implores writers, journalists and citizens of Europe to spread the attached appeal from the UBW and its report on the outrageous ongoing events in Minsk. The EWC urges all organisations to raise their voices and call on their governments to act against these flagrant violations of human rights and democratic principles.

“Belarus is part of Europe. Do not leave the people of Belarus alone in their efforts to build up a truly democratic country. We must all use our most powerful democratic instrument: our words,” Nina George concludes.

On behalf of the Board of the European Writers' Council

Myriam Diocaretz, EWC Secretary-General