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01 September 2020

## Urgent need for electoral reform in Belarus

### Motion for a resolution

tabled by Lord David BLENCATHRA and other members of the Assembly

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This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

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The Parliamentary Assembly has observed numerous elections in Belarus since 1995 and has consistently noted serious deficiencies regarding the electoral process, beyond the voting day, including: unbalanced composition of election commissions; severe obstacles to political parties and candidates registration; involvement of employees of State institutions in electoral processes; unbalanced media coverage of the election campaign; lack of transparency of early voting procedures.

The International Election Observation Mission on the 2016 parliamentary elections concluded that, despite some efforts to address some long-standing issues, a number of systemic shortcomings remained and asked for reform of the legal framework. The observation report on the early parliamentary elections of 17 November 2019 noted that the long-needed reform had not been carried out and concluded that the elections had not met international standards for democratic elections.

The presidential election of 9 August 2020, conducted under the same discredited electoral system, could not have been meaningfully observed by the Assembly, in particular in the absence of independent long-term election observers from ODIHR, and, for the same reason, cannot be considered free and fair.

In reaction to protests by the Belarus people massively challenging the results of the election and in the light of the above-mentioned systemic problems, it is more urgent than ever to take stock of the electoral process and support all stakeholders to engage in a comprehensive reform of the electoral system, in line with the Assembly's previous recommendations and in co-operation with the Venice Commission, to which Belarus is an associate member.

While the choice of political and electoral systems is the sovereign decision of Belarus, the Assembly expects Belarus to adhere to Council of Europe standards in electoral matters, as developed in particular by the Venice Commission and the Assembly itself, and finally organise competitive democratic elections which will meaningfully reflect the will of the people.

*Signed (see overleaf)*



*Signed*<sup>1</sup>:

BLENCATHRA David, United Kingdom, EC/DA  
BAKER Duncan, United Kingdom, EC/DA  
BALFE Richard, United Kingdom, NR  
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FOULKES George, United Kingdom, SOC  
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LLOYD Tony, United Kingdom, SOC  
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POCIEJ Aleksander, Poland, EPP/CD  
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RIBOLLA Alberto, Italy, EC/DA  
RUSSELL Simon, United Kingdom, EC/DA  
SCHENNACH Stefan, Austria, SOC  
SCHWABE Frank, Germany, SOC  
TRASTOUR-ISNART Laurence, France, EPP/CD  
WIECHEL Markus, Sweden, EC/DA

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe  
EC/DA: European Conservatives Group and Democratic Alliance  
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party  
SOC: Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group  
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left  
NR: Representatives not belonging to a Political Group