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Addressing the specific challenges faced by the Belarusians in exile

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Mr Julian PAHLKE and other members of the Assembly

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

Some 200 000 to 500 000 Belarusians were forced to flee their country as a result of the repression that fell after the rigged elections of 9 August 2020. While they have a common wish – return as rapidly as possible to a democratic Belarus – they do not necessarily describe themselves in the same way. However, whether they are migrants, diaspora or refugees, these Belarusians now living abroad face common challenges stemming precisely from the very reason why they left their country.

The first challenge they face is to make it clear to the receiving States that being Belarusian does not make them representatives or supporters of the Lukashenko regime. When this is not understood, their fundamental rights are affected, notably as regards the right to education (students cannot enrol in universities or are excluded on citizenship grounds), property rights (it is impossible to open or keep a bank account) and the right to liberty and security (arrests of opposition members are being carried out in EU member States on the basis of a Red Notice issued by Interpol at the request of the Ministry of Interior in Minsk).

A specific category concerns those Belarusians who found sanctuary in Ukraine and have had since to run away because of the aggression of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. They do not get the same benefits provided by the EU Directive 2001/55/EC (Temporary Protection Directive) as Ukrainian citizens.

All in all, there are serious risks of discrimination and other human rights violations facing Belarusians in exile. The Parliamentary Assembly should propose concrete solutions to Council of Europe member States so that they ensure those seeking shelter to stay legally and live decently pending the establishment of a democratic regime in Belarus.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

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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