



Doc. 16220

26 June 2025

On the situation of freedom of faith in Belarus

Written declaration No. 814

This written declaration does not reflect the position of the Assembly; only of those members that have signed it. It will not be considered further by the Assembly.

We, the undersigned, declare the following:

We condemn Aliaksandr Lukashenka's escalating assault on religious freedom in Belarus. Since the fraudulent 2020 elections, the authorities have dismantled independent civic life (human rights groups, free media, trade unions, and political parties) and, in 2024–2025, have moved against religious communities.

The repressive framework has already produced draconian sentences, e.g. to Catholic priests Andrzej Yuhnevich (13 years), Henrykh Akalatovich (11 years), and Orthodox priest Siarhiej Rezanovich (16 years).

Recent amendments to the "Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organisations" force all congregations to re-register under discriminating conditions by 5 July 2025 and impose up to two years' imprisonment for unregistered activity, which means that private home prayer could be criminalised.

Freedom of religion is protected by Belarus Constitution, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and broader Council of Europe principles.

We therefore call on the Belarusian authorities to:

repeal the July 2025 re-registration deadline and Article 193.1 criminalising unregistered groups;

release unlawfully imprisoned clergy and all political prisoners;

return seized places of worship, notably Minsk's Red Church, and cease interfering in religious autonomy.

We further urge Council of Europe bodies and member States to monitor violations, task the European Union Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief with an inquiry under international covenants, extend legal and technical support to vulnerable congregations, and build solidarity networks, so that Belarusians can worship without fear.

Signed (see overleaf)



Signed¹:

HISPÁN Pablo, Spain, EPP/CD
BAKOYANNIS Dora, Greece, EPP/CD
BASTOS Regina, Portugal, EPP/CD
BOVENS Theo, Netherlands, EPP/CD
BULAI Iulian, Romania, ALDE
CHATZIOANNIDOU Maria-Nefeli, Greece, EPP/CD
CHEPTONAR Andrian, Republic of Moldova, EPP/CD
DALLE Benjamin, Belgium, EPP/CD
DALLOZ Marie-Christine, France, EPP/CD
DAVIDOVICI Natalia, Republic of Moldova, EPP/CD
GALLES Paul, Luxembourg, EPP/CD
GÖTHBERG Gustaf, Sweden, EPP/CD
HORGA Maria-Gabriela, Romania, EPP/CD
JEVGRAFOV Aleksei, Estonia, ALDE
LEIPUTĖ Orinta, Lithuania, SOC
LEYTE Carmen, Spain, EPP/CD
LYDEKA Arminas, Lithuania, ALDE
MARKOPOULOS Dimitrios, Greece, EPP/CD
MINA Alice, San Marino, EPP/CD
MODERT Octavie, Luxembourg, EPP/CD
MOREL Louise, France, ALDE
NAGY Szabolcs, Romania, EPP/CD
NICULESCU-ȚĂGĂRLAȘ Cristian-Augustin, Romania, EPP/CD
PANMAN Tekke, Netherlands, EPP/CD
PASQUIER-CIULLA Christine, Monaco, EPP/CD
PAVIĆ Marko, Croatia, EPP/CD
PETIR Marijana, Croatia, EPP/CD
POLIDORI Catia, Italy, EPP/CD
ROBLES Gonzalo, Spain, EPP/CD
SACHEVA Denitsa, Bulgaria, EPP/CD
SCHOU Ingjerd Schie, Norway, EPP/CD
SIGHIARTĂU Robert-Ionatan, Romania, EPP/CD
SOBOLIEV Serhii, Ukraine, EPP/CD
SPĂȚARU Elena-Simona, Romania, ALDE
STAMATIS Georgios, Greece, EPP/CD
TABAKU Jorida, Albania, EPP/CD
VĖSAITĖ Birutė, Lithuania, SOC
VOKSHI Albana, Albania, EPP/CD
WIECHEL Markus, Sweden, ECPA
WIJK Elly, van, Netherlands, EPP/CD
ZINGERIS Emanuelis, Lithuania, EPP/CD

Total = 41

1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
ECPA: European Conservatives, Patriots and Affiliates
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group