Demonstrations in Belarus
Chronology of a revolution in progress

March 22\textsuperscript{nd}
Journalist Katsiaryna Barysevich and doctor Artsiom Sarokin are \textit{sentenced} to 6 months and 2 years in prison respectively after a closed trial for leaking information on the death of Roman Bondarenko, who died in November after being beaten by plain-clothes police officers. The next day, the Union again \textit{described} the violations of fundamental rights in the country as "unacceptable" and reiterated that it "continues to actively support efforts established for the collection of the evidence of torture and repressions in Belarus and to hold those responsible to account".

February 25\textsuperscript{th}
The Union \textit{extends for one year}, until February 28th 2022, the sanctions against those responsible for the electoral fraud during the presidential elections of 9 August 2020 and the repression against demonstrators, the opposition and journalists. 88 people, including Alexander Lukashenko, whom the Union no longer recognises as president, as well as 7 entities, are affected by these sanctions, which include an asset freeze and a ban on entry into the territory of the Union.

February 18\textsuperscript{th}
The European Commission "\textit{strongly condemns}" the \textit{2-year prison sentence} imposed on two journalists from the opposition TV station Belsat, Daria Tchoultsova and Katerina Bakhvalova, for reporting on a demonstration. It describes the arrests and harassment of journalists as "shameful crackdown" and calls on the Belarusian regime to respect fundamental freedoms and stop targeting journalists.
February 16th

The European Commission believes that police raids on journalists, community activists and trade union leaders during the day are "unacceptable" and constitute an "escalation of intimidation and assault on civil rights".

The Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe also denounces the situation as "unacceptable".

February 11th

In a letter to a German MP revealed by the press, the German government says it is ready to welcome 50 Belarusian opponents who are victims of torture and police violence, as part of the action plan announced by Chancellor Angela Merkel on 6 February.

February 7th

Demonstrations are being held in several countries around the world on the occasion of the Day of Solidarity with Belarus, an opposition initiative to mark six months of protest against the result of the rigged presidential election of 9 August 2020.

In a joint statement, EU High Representative Josep Borrell and Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Oliver Varhelyi reiterate the Union's support for the Belarusian people. They condemn unjust persecution, torture and prosecutions based on false accusations. They call for the early opening of a dialogue and new transparent elections.

February 6th

On the eve of the Day of Solidarity with Belarus, German Chancellor Angela Merkel gives her support to the Belarusian people and announces an action plan for Belarusian civil society, which will include visa facilitation, scholarships and support for independent media.

January 30th
As the demonstrations continued over the weekend despite the repression, Lithuanian President Nauseda Gitanas nominated the opponent Svetlana Tikhanovskaya and the Belarusian people for the Nobel Peace Prize.

**January 27th**

In an online conference, opponent Svetlana Tikhanovskaya called on the West to be "braver and stronger" in support of the Belarusian people. She asked the Union to take "as soon as possible" new sanctions against the regime of Alexander Lukashenko.

**January 18th**

The International Ice Hockey Federation decides that the world championship, scheduled for May and June in Minsk and Riga, will not be held in Belarus. It explains that keeping the competition in the capital would not have been "appropriate" and that the safety of the participants could not be guaranteed.

Athletes and politicians had called for this decision and several companies sponsoring the event had threatened to withdraw in the name of human rights.

**January 17th**

While protests continue in Belarus, on a small scale due to cold weather conditions and repression, Svetlana Tikhanovskaya speaks at the online congress of the German Christian Democratic Union (CDU). She reminds that the demonstrators are fighting to "build a democratic Belarus, based on the rule of law, democracy and respect for the citizens".

**December 17th**

The Union extends its sanctions to 36 new officials responsible for the repression against demonstrators, the opposition and journalists. 88 individuals and 7 entities, including the unrecognized President Alexander Lukashenko, are now subject to an asset freeze and a ban on entry into the Union.

**December 16th**
Opponent Svetlana Tikhanovskaya receives the 2020 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought on behalf of the democratic opposition in Belarus at a ceremony at the European Parliament in Brussels.

In her speech she said that Belarusians who have been protesting since the rigged presidential election on 9 August "are demonstrating for the freedom and dignity of Belarusians, of Europeans, yours and ours.»

She stresses that "every Belarusian who takes part in a peaceful demonstration against violence and lawlessness ... is a hero. Each of them is an example of courage, compassion and dignity in my eyes.»

December 13th

More than 120 demonstrations take place in Minsk and other cities of the country. At least 300 people are arrested.

December 11th

The European Commission announces a 24 million support to civil society in Belarus, through assistance to independent media and NGOs, and a scholarship programme for young people in particular. The aid plan also aims to build the resilience of Belarusian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and to support the health sector. More than 150,000 people have been infected with Covid-19 in the country.

December 9th

The Prosecutor General of Lithuania opens a preliminary investigation for crimes against humanity and war crimes against members of the Belarusian regime. Lithuania is the first EU country to launch an investigation into crimes committed by the regime since the August 9th presidential election. Opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaya calls on other European countries to follow Lithuania's example.

December 6th

In Minsk, demonstrators gather again in small groups to avoid police repression. About 300 people are arrested.
December 4th

The UN Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet notes that the situation has deteriorated in Belarus in recent weeks, "particularly with respect to the right of peaceful assembly". She estimates that some 27,000 people have been arrested in connection with peaceful demonstrations since August 9th. She calls on the authorities to release all those detained illegally or arbitrarily and to open a political dialogue with the opposition.

November 29th

The inhabitants of Minsk have been demonstrating like every Sunday since August 9th, but by organising "marches of neighbours" in order to limit the risk of police repression. Several dozen people were arrested nevertheless.

November 27th

Visiting a hospital, Alexander Lukashenko said he will no longer be president when the new constitution is in place. But he gives no indication of the content of the constitutional reform he is preparing, nor when it might be adopted.

November 26th

In a resolution adopted by 613 votes to 41, the European Parliament "condemns in the strongest possible terms the murder of Raman Bandarenko", who died after being beaten up by plainclothes policemen, and calls for "immediate, thorough, impartial and independent" investigations into his death and that of several other demonstrators.

MEPs reiterate their support for the Belarusian people, call for the immediate release of political prisoners and call on the regime to stop violence against demonstrators and journalists.

They support the initiation of an immediate European Parliament fact-finding mission to Vilnius and Warsaw, as well as engagement with the opposition in Belarus in order to "explore possible mediation and democracy-support activities". They consider the current sanctions against the regime to be insufficient and are calling for new ones.

They also call for more EU support for civil society in Belarus.
November 22\textsuperscript{nd}

The Sunday demonstration against the regime in Minsk ended in new clashes with the security forces and more than 300 arrests.

November 20\textsuperscript{th}

Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia decide to impose an entry ban on 26 Belarusians, including the Minister of Information, the Minister of Sports and Tourism, as well as other senior officials from the Ministries of Interior and Justice, representatives of trade unions and state media involved in misinformation.

November 19\textsuperscript{th}

The European foreign affairs ministers agreed to prepare a third round of sanctions, which could target high-ranking Belarusian officials, as well as "institutions, entrepreneurs and firms", according to High Representative Josep Borrell.

November 15\textsuperscript{th}

The demonstration held in Minsk like every Sunday pays homage to Raman Bandarenko, who died after being beaten by men in civilian clothes near a place decorated in the colours of the opposition. More than 1000 people are arrested by the police.

November 13\textsuperscript{th}

In a statement, the EU said that the death of Raman Bandarenko, a 31-year-old Belarusian who died after being beaten by men who were probably plainclothes policemen, is the "outrageous and shameful result of the actions by the Belarusian authorities who have not only directly and violently carried out repression of their own population, but also created an environment whereby such lawless, violent acts can take place".

The Union once again calls on the regime to stop the "violence and persecution", to release political prisoners and to investigate and prosecute human rights violations.
November 8th

Another Sunday of demonstrations in Minsk and other cities of the country resulted in the arrest of several hundred people.

November 6th

The EU adopts sanctions against 15 leaders of the Belarusian regime, including Alexander Lukashenko and his son, for their role in the violent repression of the democratic movement. The sanctions include a travel ban within the Union and the freezing of personal assets.

November 5th

In a report on the August 9th election, the OSCE said the poll was "neither transparent, free, or fair". It states that the allegations of human rights violations by the regime are "massive and systematic and proven beyond doubt". The report notes that the repression of the protests has resulted in torture and abuse in a climate of "general impunity".

Consequently, the OSCE calls for the annulment of the election results and the organisation of "genuine" elections, the ending of violence, the release of all political prisoners and journalists and the respect of international rules of justice.

November 1st

For the 13th consecutive Sunday, thousands of Belarusians demonstrated against the regime, despite ammunition threats by the security forces. About 300 people are arrested in Minsk. The strike launched by Svetlana Tikhanovskaya continues in some factories, administrations and universities.

October 26th

The opponent Svetlana Tikhanovskaya announces the start of a general strike to demand the resignation of Aleksandr Lukashenko, whom she had given until 25 October to leave power. She claims that "employees of state factories and enterprises, transport workers and miners, teachers and students" have stopped work.
The day before, as every Sunday since the rigged election of August 9th, thousands of people demonstrated in Minsk and other cities in the country.

**October 22nd**

The Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought is awarded by the European Parliament to the democratic opposition in Belarus represented by the Coordination Council.

Parliament President David Sassoli congratulates the opposition representatives for "their courage, resilience and determination". He stresses that they "have on their side something that brute force can never defeat - and this is the truth." "Dear laureates, stay strong and not to give up on your fight. Know that we are by your side," he adds.

The award ceremony will take place on 16 December.

**October 21st**

In a resolution adopted by 602 votes to 44, the European Parliament supports the Union's decision not to recognise Alexander Lukashenko as President of Belarus after the end of his term of office on 5 November and calls for him to be included in the list of persons sanctioned.

The Parliament recognises the Coordination Council "as the legitimate representative of the people demanding democratic change and freedom in Belarus" and supports its efforts for "a peaceful and democratic transition of power as a result of an inclusive national dialogue".

It calls on the Union to rapidly implement the planned sanctions against those responsible for the regime, to review its relations with Belarus and to put in place measures to provide economic and financial support to Belarusian civil society.

**October 18th**

As every Sunday since the rigged election of August 9th, thousands of demonstrators gather in Minsk and in other Belarusian cities and dozens of them are arrested by the police.

**October 16th**
The European Council "endorse" the conclusions adopted by the ministers on October 12th on sanctions against those in charge within the Belarusian regime and the reduction of political and economic relations. It condemns the continuing violence against peaceful demonstrators.

October 13th

The opposition leader Svetlana Tsikhanovskaya, who has fled to Lithuania, gives Alexander Lukashenko until 25 October to announce his resignation, end the dispersal of the demonstrations by force and release all political prisoners.

"If our demands are not met by 25 October, the whole country will take to the streets peacefully. And on 26 October, a national strike by all companies will begin, all roads will be blocked, sales in state-owned shops will collapse", S. Tsikhanovskaya warns.

October 12th

At their meeting in Luxembourg, the EU foreign ministers reiterated that Alexander Lukashenko has "no democratic legitimacy", condemned the violence against the protesters and once again called on the Belarusian authorities to seek a "peaceful and democratic solution" to the crisis.

Ministers declared their readiness to adopt new sanctions against Belarusian officials, "including A. Lukashenko".

They decide to reduce political and economic relations with the Belarusian authorities and to redirect them towards civil society. They announce that additional resources will be allocated to support young people, vulnerable people, independent media, and the private and health sectors.

The European Parliament selects "the democratic opposition in Belarus, represented by the Coordination Council" as one of the three finalists for the 2020 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought. The final vote takes place on 22 October.

October 11th

Belarusian police forcibly disperse further protests gathering several thousand people in Minsk and arrest at least 250 people in the capital and other cities of the country.
The day before, Alexander Lukashenko had organised a filmed meeting in the KGB prison with several political prisoners including former presidential candidate Viktor Babariko and several members of the opposition Coordination Council.

**October 7th**

At a hearing by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the French National Assembly, Svetlana Tsikhanovskaya appealed to France: "Help the Belarusian people, help to avoid violence and civil conflict! Help to end this crisis in a dignified way, help us to conduct free and fair elections".

**October 6th**

German Chancellor Angela Merkel receives the opponent Svetlana Tsikhanovskaya in Berlin, who calls on European countries to maintain pressure on the Belarusian regime.

**October 4th**

Despite a warning from the authorities and further arrests, tens of thousands of people are again demonstrating in Minsk and other cities across the country. The Belarusian Human Rights Centre Viasna counts 77 "political prisoners".

In a statement, the High Representative of the Union Josep Borrell considered it "unfounded and regrettable" that the Belarusian authorities are asking Poland and Lithuania to recall their ambassadors and reduce their diplomatic staff in Minsk.

**October 2nd**

The Council imposes sanctions on 40 individuals responsible for the repression and intimidation of demonstrators. The measures include a travel ban and a freeze on financial assets.

**October 1st**

Meeting in Brussels on October 1st, the European Council condemns "the unacceptable violence by Belarusian authorities against peaceful protesters, as
well as intimidation, arbitrary arrests and detentions following the presidential elections, the results of which it does not recognise."

It calls for an end to repression, the release of political prisoners and the opening of a political dialogue. It calls on the Council to introduce sanctions and encourages the Commission to prepare a "comprehensive plan of economic support for democratic Belarus".

**September 28th**

President Emmanuel Macron is visiting Lithuania and Latvia. In Vilnius he met S. Tsikhanovskaya, who accepts France’s invitation to come and address the National Assembly.

**September 25th**

The Baltic States have expanded their sanctions against Belarusian officials.

**September 24th**

The European Union refused to recognise Alexander Lukashenko as President of Belarus. EU High Representative Josep Borrell said that the swearing-in and "the new mandate claimed by Aleksandr Lukashenko lack any democratic legitimacy".

**September 23rd**

Alexander Lukashenko was sworn in for a sixth term.

**September 21st**

Svetlana Tsikhanovskaya meets EU foreign ministers in Brussels. She is also received at the European Parliament, where she declares that the protest movement is not a geopolitical revolution, that it is "it is neither pro-Russian nor anti-Russian, not pro-EU nor anti-EU, (...) it is simply pro-Belarus and a democratic revolution".

Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda, presented an economic assistance plan prepared with Poland and Romania to help "democratic Belarus". The three countries propose a preferential trade regime between the EU and Belarus, the possibility for Belarusians to enter the EU without visas and support for the
country's application for accession to the World Trade Organisation. This plan should be presented by Lithuania, Poland and Romania to the European partners at the European Council, postponed from 24 and 25 September to 1 and 2 October.

**September 20th**

Despite the mobilisation of the police, tens of thousands of people demonstrated in Minsk.

**September 17th**

The European Parliament rejects in a resolution the results of the "so-called presidential election". It announces that it will not recognise A. Lukashenko as President at the end of his current term of office and that it regards the Coordination Council as the "interim representation of the people demanding democratic change".

The Parliament condemns the repression "in the strongest possible terms" and calls for the "immediate and unconditional release" of all political prisoners. It calls for sanctions against state officials, including A. Lukashenko.

On the same day, Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki proposed that the Union set up a stabilisation fund for Belarus of at least €1 billion. He will submit his project to the European Council on 24 and 25 September.

**September 15th**

The European Parliament's Renew Europe group proposes to award the 2020 Sakharov Prize to "the democratic opposition in Belarus, represented - amongst others - by Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, president-elect of Belarus, Siarhei Tsikhanousky, video blogger and political prisoner, Ales Bialiatski, founder of the Belarusian human rights organisation “Viasna”, Stepan Svetlov, founder of the Telegram channel NEXTA, Mikola Statkevich, political prisoner and presidential candidate in the 2010 elections, and Svetlana Alexievich, member of the National Coordination Council of Belarus and Nobel Laureate."

On 16 September, the Group of the European People's Party in the Parliament also proposed to award the prize to "the democratic opposition of Belarus represented by the Coordination Council and a number of opposition figures including Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya". 
September 13th

More than 100,000 people are marching again in Minsk. The authorities announce 400 arrests. Since his exile, S. Tsikhanouskaya salutes "a truly heroic people" who continue their "fight for freedom".

September 11th

In a statement on behalf of the Union, J. Borrell "deplores the escalation of violence and forced exile of members of the Coordination Council". He called for members of the Council and Belarusian civil society to be "protected from intimidation, forced exile, arbitrary arrest and violence".

He calls for the release of prisoners and recalls that the Union is "determined" to take sanctions against those responsible for the repression.

September 10th

After the visit of some diplomats the day before, Ambassadors from 10 Member States and diplomats from 5 other Member States visit Nobel Prize winner Svetlana Alexievitch at her home in Minsk to offer their support. S. Alexievitch is the last member of the Coordination Council to have been neither arrested nor exiled and is subject to regular threats.

September 9th

The Socialists and Democrats Group in the European Parliament proposes to award this year's Sakharov Prize, attributed by the Parliament to human rights defenders, "to the brave Belarusian women in general, and in particular to Svetlana Tsikhanouskaya, Maria Kalesnikava, and Veranika Tsapkala".

September 8th

The Secretary General of the Council of Europe Marija Pejcincovic Buric calls for an end to the "repressive developments" of the Belarusian regime and calls for a "fair and open dialogue with the civil society in view of preparing and conducting necessary reforms with no delay", for which she offers the Council of Europe's assistance.

Svetlana Tikhanovskaya addresses the Political Affairs Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. She assured that the Co-
ordination Council, "despite the repression, is still engaged in dialogue" and recalled that "Mr Lukashenko does not have any legitimacy" after the rigged election.

**September 7th**

Maryia Kalesnikova, is abducted in Minsk and then arrested when she refuses to be forcibly deported to Ukraine.

In a *communiqué*, the High Representative Josep Borrell condemns in the name of the Union "the unabating arbitrary and unexplained arrests and detentions" and demands the immediate release of all political prisoners arrested before and after the August 9th election.

**September 6th**

As every Sunday, tens of thousands of people demonstrate in Minsk and other cities of the country. The authorities reported the arrest of more than 600 people.

**September 1st**

Students start a strike movement at the beginning of the academic year. In the following days, several dozen of them were arrested on campus.

**August 31st**

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania blacklist Lukashenko and around 30 other senior Belarusian officials, who are banned from entering the territory of the 3 countries.

**August 30th**

Tens of thousands of people demonstrated again in Minsk and other cities of the country. Dozens of people were arrested.

In an op-ed published in the French Journal du Dimanche, the High Representative of the Union Josep Borrell called for elections to resolve the crisis: "The best solution would be to replay the game under the control of the OSCE".
August 29th
Belarusian authorities withdrew the accreditations of several foreign media covering the protest movement and the repression.

August 28th
At a special meeting of the OSCE Standing Committee, Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama, Chairman-in-Office of the organization, renewed the offer to act as "facilitator of the necessary dialogue" between the government and the Belarusian opposition.

August 27th
Meeting in Berlin, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Union decided to sanction several high-ranking Belarusian officials. The final list will be finalized in the coming days.

August 26th
Summoned by the investigators in the context of legal proceedings against the protest movement, Nobel Prize winner Svetlana Alexievich refused to answer questions. The arrests of opponents continue.

August 25th
Svetlana Tsikhanouskaya spoke at an extraordinary meeting of the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee. She declared that a "peaceful revolution is under way": "The revolution in Belarus is not a geopolitical revolution. It is neither a pro or anti-Russian revolution, it is neither a pro or anti-European Union revolution. It is a democratic revolution".

August 24th
Sergei Dilevsky and Olga Kovalkova, members of the "Coordination Council" to promote a peaceful transition of power, were arrested in front of the striking Minsk Tractor Plant (MTZ).
August 23rd

A further demonstration in Minsk brought together about 100,000 people. Human chains are being formed in Lithuania, where Svetlana Tsikhanouskaya is a refugee, as well as in Estonia and Latvia, in support of the Belarusian people.

August 22nd

Alexandre Lukashenko asked the army to prepare for action.

August 20th

President Emmanuel Macron and Chancellor Angela Merkel meet at Fort Brégançon. They repeated the Union's offer of mediation and assured Russian President Vladimir Putin that the Union does not see the crisis in Belarus as a "replica" of that in Ukraine.

August 19th

Meeting in an extraordinary videoconference, the heads of state and government of the Union reiterated that the election was "neither free nor fair" and that they do not acknowledge the result.

They declared that "the citizens of Belarus have the right to decide their future" and condemned "the disproportionate and unacceptable violence used by the national authorities against peaceful demonstrators". "The EU calls for a thorough and transparent investigation of all alleged cases of abuse".

They confirmed that the Union "will soon impose sanctions against a large number of those responsible for the violence, repression and falsification of election results.

They added: "We call on the Belarusian authorities to find a way out of the crisis by putting an end to the violence, easing tensions and engaging in an inclusive national dialogue," and expressed their readiness to contribute to a peaceful solution.
**August 17th**

Strikes were organized in many factories.

The OSCE offers its mediation for an "open and constructive" dialogue between the government and the opposition.

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**August 16th**

About 100,000 people demonstrated in Minsk, the largest protest rally in the country's history. Thousands more people are gathering all over the country.

From Lithuania, Svetlana Tsikhanouskaya called for an indefinite strike by Belarusians.

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**August 14th**

At an extraordinary meeting, the European Ministers of Foreign Affairs considered that the results of the ballot "were falsified".

They proposed mediation by the Union to "establish and facilitate a dialogue between the political authorities, the opposition and society in general" in Belarus.

They decided to prepare sanctions against those responsible for the violence, repression and falsification of the electoral results".

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**August 12th**

The authorities announced the death in Gomel of a second demonstrator while in detention after the August 9th demonstrations.

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**August 11th**

Svetlana Tikhanovskaya took refuge in Lithuania.

In a statement on behalf of the Union, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, said the election was "neither free nor fair."

He added: "We call on Belarusian political leaders to engage in a real and inclusive dialogue with all parts of society in order to avoid further violence. The
EU will continue to support a democratic, independent, sovereign, prosperous and stable Belarus.”

**August 10th**

China and Russia acknowledge the outcome of the election, which is being challenged by the Member States of the European Union.

Demonstrations continued, one demonstrator was killed, 2,000 people were arrested.

**August 9th**

**Presidential election in Belarus**

The outgoing President Alexander Lukashenko won with 80.23% of the votes. Svetlana Tsikhanouskaya, opposition candidate after the imprisonment of her husband, the opponent Sergei Tikhanovski, was officially credited with 9.9%.

Demonstrations took place in the capital Minsk, 3,000 people were arrested.