

Joint Position of Belarusian Human Rights Organizations on Adoption of Interagency Plan of Implementation of Recommendations for Belarus from UN mechanisms

3 November 2016

We, representatives of the human rights organizations in Belarus, support the approval of the Interagency Plan of implementation of the recommendations adopted by Belarus upon the second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review in the UN Human Rights Council, and the recommendations for Belarus formulated by the human rights treaty bodies for 2016-2019.

We re-emphasize our commitment to the common positions, stated by the representatives of the human rights organizations in Belarus in 2015-2016:

1. Open [Appeal](#) on Priority Reinstatement Measures, 10 December 2015;
2. Concerted [Position](#) of Belarusian Human Rights Defenders on Priorities in Determining Strategy of International Partners' Interaction with Belarus, 28 January 2016;
3. Joint [Position](#) of Belarusian Human Rights Defenders ahead of Next Round of EU-Belarus Dialogue on Human Rights, 24 May 2016

We believe that the adoption of the Interagency Plan can be an effective tool to improve the situation of human rights in Belarus; however, we believe it needs the certain improvements based on the proposals of the Belarusian human rights organizations, as well as on the recommendations of the UN treaty bodies, which the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Committee against Torture and Human Rights Committee will formulate in the near future.

We want to remind that in May 2016, the human rights organizations in Belarus developed the [indicators](#) of the implementation of the recommendations, adopted by the Republic of Belarus in the framework of the UPR second cycle, and submitted them to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We regret that to date, the relevant government agencies have failed to include our proposals in the subjects for discussion.

The analysis of the Interagency Plan has shown that it has partially taken into consideration 17 out of the 22 topics, on which the coalition of the Belarusian human rights organizations presented their proposals. A number of activities included in the Plan partially take into account the suggestions of the human rights organizations; however, the description of these activities is vague, fails to provide for measurable results and as such cannot result in quality improvements in the situation of human rights in Belarus.

A significant shortage of the Plan is the lack of measures aiming to implement the recommendations in such important areas of human rights as freedom of expression and association, religious freedom and social and economic rights. During the further work on the Plan improvement, we consider it necessary to include in the Plan the activities aiming to implement the recommendations on the above issues, formulated for Belarus by the UN mechanisms.

We view in a positive light the inclusion in the Interagency Plan of the provisions on the state cooperation with the civil society organizations for the promotion and protection of human rights. At the same time, we emphasize that effective cooperation is only impossible when there are no obstacles there to the registration of the civil society organizations, and the activity of unregistered organizations is not criminalized. In this regard, we once again call the Belarusian authorities to register the Viasna Human Rights Center and other non-profit civil society organizations applying for registration, to remove Article 193.1 from the Criminal Code of Belarus,

and to lift the ban on the activities of unregistered civil society organizations. We also affirm the need to stop the pressure on the Belarusian civil society activists and to lift the ban on the entry of the Belarusian human rights defender Alena Tankačeva.

We believe that the effective implementation of the Plan is only possible on condition of the process transparency and with the involvement of all the parties concerned. To this effect, it necessary, in close cooperation with the civil society organizations, to establish and make public and available the detailed action plans for the relevant ministries and agencies to implement the activities provided for in the Interagency Plan. At the same time, we express our willingness to participate in the development and implementation of these detailed action plans.

Assembly of Pro-Democratic NGOs of Belarus

Belarusian Association of Journalists

Belarusian Documentation Centre

Barys Zvozkau Belarusian Human Rights House

Belarusian Helsinki Committee

Human Rights Center Viasna

FoRB Initiative

Advisory Centre on Current International Practices and Implementation of Them in Law “Human Constanta”

Office for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Legal Initiative NGO

Salidarnasć (Solidarity) Committee

Legal Transformation Center (Lawtrend)

Natalia Mankoŭskaja, human rights defender