

**STATEMENT  
OF THE SAEIMA OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA**

**on the legitimacy of the mandate claimed by the president of Belarus**

The Saeima of the Republic of Latvia,

*in response to* the inauguration ceremony of Alexander Lukashenko as the president of Belarus, which took place on 23 September 2020 at the Palace of Independence in Minsk and was kept secret until the very last moment and during which Alexander Lukashenko took the presidential oath assuming his sixth term of office, thus aggravating the political crisis in Belarus even further;

*taking into account* the Statement of the Saeima of 18 August 2020 on the presidential election in Belarus on 9 August 2020, the Conclusions of the European Council of 19 August 2020 confirming that the EU does not recognise the results of the Belarusian presidential election of 9 August 2020, as well as the Statement by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell on 24 September 2020 expressing the refusal of the EU to recognise Alexander Lukashenko as the president of Belarus because the election and the inauguration process lacked any democratic legitimacy;

*emphasising* that, despite the repressions and violence committed by the Belarusian authorities against the people of Belarus, the mass arrests and persecution of the political opposition and civil society representatives, large-scale peaceful protests continue to take place in the capital city Minsk and other cities of Belarus, which clearly shows that the Belarusian people demand that democratic rights, fundamental human rights and freedoms be respected;

*pointing out* the non-compliance of the inauguration ceremony held on 23 September with the current legislation of Belarus, which stipulates that the ceremony shall be public, broadcast on state television and radio, and announced to the public well in advance,

*strongly condemns* the crackdown by the Belarusian authorities on peaceful protesters, subjecting them to violent repressions, and the fact that, during the peaceful mass protests following the presidential election of 9 August 2020, demonstrators, bystanders, journalists, and other members of the society have been subjected to unfounded brutal and physical violence and even torture only because they exercise their freedom of assembly, freedom of expression, and their right to protest;

*calls* on the Belarusian authorities to immediately discontinue the use of force, violence, repressions, and other violations of human rights and to refrain from any actions that do not promote the necessary dialogue with the people of Belarus, its civil society, which includes the political opposition, and to immediately release all political prisoners;

*stresses* its unwavering support to the investigation launched by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on 17 September 2020 into human rights abuses and election fraud in Belarus and *firmly supports* the work of the UN Human Rights Council aimed at ensuring that international organisations record and report human rights violations, perpetrators are brought to account, and victims receive justice;

*urges* to promptly establish a comprehensive, effective, and timely EU sanctions regime that would allow to confront any person, public institution, NGO, or any other body responsible for severe human rights violations and abuse of power;

*reaffirms* its constant support for the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Belarus and to the people of Belarus;

*reiterating* that the Belarusian presidential election held on 9 August 2020 was neither free nor fair, that Latvia does not recognise the election results published by the Belarusian authorities and that the mandate based on these results cannot be considered to be obtained in a democratic way and thus legitimate,

*does not recognise* Alexander Lukashenko as the legitimate president of Belarus.