



Permanent Mission
of the Federal Republic of Germany to the OSCE
Vienna

***Joint statement of the Informal Group of Friends of Democratic Belarus
as delivered by
the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany to the OSCE,
Sibylle Osten-Vaa,
during the 1526th Permanent Council of the OSCE
Current Issue: On the Release of Prisoners in Belarus
Vienna, 3rd July 2025***

Madam Chair,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the following participating States, who are members of the Informal Group of Friends of Democratic Belarus: Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czechia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and my own country, Germany.

The following participating States are also joining this statement: Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Liechtenstein, Malta, Moldova, North Macedonia and San Marino.

We welcome the release of several political prisoners, including Siarhei Tsikhanousky, in which the United States of America played a crucial role.

While these are positive steps, we are deeply concerned that as of 26 June at least 1 170 political prisoners still remain in custody in Belarus according to the human rights organization

Viasna. Many are subjected to torture and ill-treatment, including prolonged isolation and denial of essential medical care. Tragically, at least eight of them died in detention due to these inhumane conditions.

We are also mindful of those who, upon release, are forced to flee Belarus or are compelled to remain under continuous repression that effectively prolongs their punishment beyond imprisonment.

Moreover, the Belarusian authorities continue to arrest and detain opponents or people perceived as such and to suppress independent media, in disregard of international obligations and OSCE principles and commitments.

Against this background, we reiterate our call for the Belarusian authorities to:

- Stop persecuting individuals for exercising their rights to freedom of expression, to freedom of association and to peaceful assembly.
- Immediately and unconditionally release all political prisoners, most urgently those with health issues and disabilities, the elderly and single parents and to ensure their rehabilitation.
- Ensure fair and humane treatment of all prisoners, in particular by allowing prisoners who have been prevented from communicating with their families to do so, and by granting prompt access to appropriate medical care for those in need.

We will continue to support the Belarusian people's aspiration for a free, democratic and independent Belarus.

Thank you.