



**NORDENS FACKLIGA SAMORGANISATION
POHJOLAN AMMATILLINEN YHTEISJÄRJESTÖ
COUNCIL OF NORDIC TRADE UNIONS**

Copenhagen and Stockholm 19 August 2020

Embassy of the Republic of Belarus in
the Republic of Finland
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Situation in Belarus – Statement from The Council of Nordic Trade Unions, NFS

We write on behalf of the Council of Nordic Trade Unions - NFS and our 15 member organisations which represents 8,5 million members including academics, white collar and blue-collar employees across all Nordic countries concerning the fraudulent conduct of the Belarus presidential elections.

The Council of Nordic Trade Unions have with great concern followed the developments in Belarus in the wake of the presidential elections. It is after the results of the elections were presented on August 9, that the people of Belarus took to the streets.

The NFS is concerned with:

1. The validity of the election of Alexander Lukashenko despite clear evidence that the majority of Belarussian people do not support him. With this in mind, we call for a process to relaunch elections under supervision trusted by all parties as well as international observers to ensure fair renewed elections.
2. The situation regarding the use of brutal force against and arrests of protesters, citizens and trade unionists. We and demand immediate release of these people and an end to all violence towards citizens, peaceful protesters and trade unionists.
3. The suppression on communications, internet and media, and the free movement of people to stop communication and spreading of information within and outside Belarus. With regards to this we call for the regime to secure communications, internet connections and freedom of the press and free movement within and outside the country.

The NFS also supports the ETUC in their call to the “European Union to convene an urgent EU Summit to assess the Belarussian authority’s actions and review the EU relations with Belarus. This includes the reintroduction of commensurate sanctions for electoral fraud and violence as well as reconsidering cooperation with the country, including within the Eastern Partnership. Strengthening support to Belarussian civil society - including independent unions - and stopping any EU financial support to the government and state-controlled projects - including through multilateral development banks – must also be urgently addressed.”

We support the Belarussian free trade union movement in their fight for respect and trade union rights, as well as the freedom of the country. The independent unions of Belarus are the largest democratic and independent civil society movement.

“The Belarussian regime has all but quenched all trade union rights despite ratification of ILO’s conventions on the right to strike and the right to organise. As Trade Unions are often seen as drivers of social change and democratisation the shutting down of trade union rights can only be seen as an attempt at hindering democratisation of Belarus” - states NFS chairperson Bente Sorgenfrey.

Yours Sincerely,



Bente Sorgenfrey
President
Council of Nordic Trade Unions – NFS



Magnus Gissler
General Secretary
Council of Nordic Trade Unions – NFS