

PLATFORMA Statement on recent events in Belarus

PLATFORMA shares the Council of European Municipalities and Regions' (CEMR) position and condemns the violence against Belarusian protestors following allegedly fraudulent presidential elections. We appeal for peaceful, open and inclusive dialogue between all parties. The elections, which took place in Belarus on 9 August 2020, did not comply with any international standards of democracy and the rule of law. These elections were neither free nor fair.

We urge the Belarusian authorities to stop the persecution of political opponents, to immediately release all those who are unfairly detained and to respect human rights and freedoms. We call upon the Belarusian government to immediately engage in a genuine political dialogue with the opposition to avoid further bloodshed and organise new elections under the scrutiny of international observers.

We call on the European Union and Member States to support dialogue and mediation processes in coordination with neighbouring countries and all parties concerned to engage Belarus in a transition process leading to democracy with fair elections.

We furthermore urge the EU institutions and national governments to strengthen assistance to Belarusian civil society, including to organisations promoting local democracy and municipal autonomy, which are a genuine training ground for democratic citizenship and the rule of law.

PLATFORMA with Europe's municipalities and regions will support Belarus' democratic development and the growth of city-to-city and region-to-region ties. We are confident that only nonviolence and dialogue can produce a positive solution for all concerned.

Links to sources of additional information and statements

- [Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania \(ALAL\)](#) official statement addressed to partner municipalities in Belarus
- [Joint Statement](#) of Nordic-Baltic Foreign Ministers on recent developments in Belarus
- [Official statement](#) by Republic of Moldova
- The Council of Europe, [statement](#) by PACE President Rik Daems
- The Council of Europe, [statement](#) by Secretary General Marija Pejčinović Burić
- [Joint statement](#) by the European Parliament
- [Conclusions](#) by the President of the European Council following the video conference of the members of the European Council on 19 August 2020.
- European Parliament, AFET Committee [statement](#)

Information corner - Local Government in Belarus discover how it works

Belarus is not a member state of the [Council of Europe](#) and therefore, has not adhered to the European [Charter](#) for Local Self-Government.

According to the [comparative study](#) published by the Council of Europe on the Roles and responsibilities of mayors and local councillors in the [Eastern Partnership](#) Countries, there is two types of local authority in Belarus:

- **Local Government which refers to Executive Committees.** They are state administration bodies, not accountable to citizens. They are directly nominated by, subordinated and accountable to the President of the Republic of Belarus.
- **Local self-government refers to Local Council of Deputies** elected by citizens every four years. Local councillors execute their powers on an unpaid basis.

Local Governments have a greater sphere of competences than Local Council of Deputies (130 against 50) and have a direct impact on citizens day-to day life activities. Read more about competences [here](#).

There are three levels of local self-government:

- **Regional level** There are three paid members of staff (chairperson of the Council, main specialist and the driver)
- **Basic level** There are three paid members of staff (chairperson of the Council, main specialist and the driver)
- **Primary level** there are no paid members of staff.

It is noteworthy that there is a combination of elected and executive powers at the primary (rural) level: the chairperson of the council also serves as the chairperson of the executive committee at the primary (rural) level (state administration). Therefore, if such a chairperson of the executive committee leaves the post, such person automatically loses the elected position of the chairperson of the council at the primary (rural) level.

According to the Constitution, there is no municipal property, it is considered a subclass of the state property.

PLATFORMA, the pan-European coalition of local and regional governments and their associations active in development cooperation, is working with Eastern Partnership Associations of local and regional governments since 2002 through the Council of European Municipalities and Regions. Since 2015, PLATFORMA has developed an Eastern partnership programme aiming at strengthening local and regional governance, and developing capacity building of national associations of local authorities, in particular in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

The diversity of PLATFORMA's partners is what makes the network unique. PLATFORMA reflects the diversity of local and regional governments' realities in Europe and across the world.

The aim of PLATFORMA is to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and mutual learning, but also to strengthen the specific role of local and regional governments in development policies.

In 2015, PLATFORMA signed a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) with the European Commission. Its signatories commit to take actions based on common values and objectives to tackle global poverty and inequalities, while promoting local democracy and sustainable development.

The Secretariat of PLATFORMA is hosted by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions ([CEMR](#)).

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