



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1344 Vienna, 11 November 2021

EU statement on the situation at the European Union Border

1. The orchestrated instrumentalization of human beings by the Belarus regime for political purposes has reached a new alarming dimension over the past days. Groups of migrants are escorted by armed Belarusian security forces towards the borders of EU member states with the aim to force illegal entries.
2. This shows the cynicism of the Belarusian regime that, by stirring up the crisis at the EU's external borders, is trying to distract attention from the situation in the country, where brutal repression and human rights violations are continuing and even worsening.
3. The EU strongly condemns the Lukashenko regime for deliberately putting people's lives and wellbeing in danger. Not only does it break international law, it also disregards the fundamental human rights to which Belarus has committed. Such inhumane actions call for a strong international reaction and cooperation in order to hold Belarus regime accountable for the violations. International organisations need to be provided with immediate and unhindered access to people therein to deliver humanitarian assistance.
4. We stand in full solidarity with the Member States affected by this hybrid attack and will continue assisting those most directly impacted. Fundamental values will continue to guide our actions, especially as regards the protection of migrants' human rights.
5. We are working closely with countries of origin and transit to put an end to the actions of the Lukashenko regime. This is also in the interest of the citizens of the countries of origin. We commend efforts of countries, such as Iraq, that are taking concrete steps in this respect.

6. The EU will continue to counter the state-sponsored illegal migration, including smuggling of migrants, organised by the Belarusian regime, including by expanding our sanctions regime so the EU can target those involved in and contributing to activities by the Lukashenko regime that facilitate the illegal crossing of the external borders of the Union. Instrumentalization of migrants for political purposes cannot be tolerated.

7. We will also continue to denounce the human rights violations perpetrated by the regime against its own citizens, to consider further restrictive measures against those responsible and to support the people of Belarus.

The Candidate Countries the REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, as well as UKRAINE align themselves with this statement.

* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.