

STATEMENT BELARUS

As President of the women in the EPP I follow the ongoing brutalities of the Lukashenko regime in Belarus with great concern.

Belarus is facing presidential elections, and like for over 20 years, of a deeply unequal kind. The last elections were rejected internationally as being illegal.

Where there are at least 2 outstanding women that are candidates, being prepared to run for president, and who have the required number of signatures backing them,

Lukashenka states on public television that Belarus is not ready for a woman as a leader! He says this insulting sentence: „Belarus is not Lithuania where Grybauskaite came, smiled, sat a bit, and left”. Women are not only dismissed or treated unfairly by the president and his regime, but they are systematically forced out of the public sphere, in most brutal and unacceptable ways. While yet 2 male candidates end up in prison, one female candidate as well as female staff members of different initiative groups, and even random women protesters are being blackmailed. They are blackmailed to give up, by threats of rape and by a systematic and direct threat of the public authorities that their children will be taken in custody from them and put in orphanages.

At a minimum, Belarusian authorities must stop using children and families as pawns in political games! The Central Electoral Committee of Belarus must sanction such abuse of power.

It is a principle question that women must be accepted as real participants of politics and not barred from proving themselves.

To conclude: The EPP Women strongly urge the Belarussian authorities to respect the human rights of men and women and to respect children's rights.

Lukashenka, stop these cruelties!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Doris Pack'.

Dr. h.c. Doris Pack, President EPP Women