

Committee: The United Nations Security Council

Issue: Situation in Belarus

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Position: President and Deputy President.

INTRODUCTION

Dear delegate,

My name is Andreas Georgantis and I have the honor to serve as a deputy president in this year's 6th AtsMun THIMUN affiliated. I'm 18 years old, last year I graduated from A' Arsakeio-Tositseio Ekalis and now I am a freshman student at the department of Law in Democritus University of Thrace. I look forward to seeing you in the conference. Do not hesitate to contact me in my personal email address; and.georgantis@gmail.com

I am Chris Tsitsiridakis and I will be the President in this year's Security Council. I am also 18 and a graduate of A' Arsakeio of Ekali and currently I am studying philosophy in the Kapodistrian University of Athens. It would be an honor to work with you in such an interesting topic. I remind you that you should study our Guide and also get familiar with SC's special procedures. Your preparation should not stop there. Study Guides are just manuals and their purpose is to enable you to carry out your own research. In the last section you could find the bibliography, the sources that we used to create this Study Guide. I advise you to consider them also. You could contact us in our e-mail addresses for everything you need. I look forward to meeting you. My email address is tsitsirid@gmail.com

This year's topic of the Security Council focuses on the situation in Belarus. Since the Belarusian independence in 1990, Belarus has had only one President, Alexander Lukashenko. He has been characterized as "Europe's last dictator", based on the freedom of the Belarusian elections. In 2020 more than ever the issue is crucial for both the Belarusian and the world peace, after the last elections in August 2020.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

State Ownership

State ownership, also called government ownership and public ownership, is the ownership of an industry, asset, or enterprise by the state or a public body representing a community as opposed to an individual or private party¹.

Free and Fair Elections

‘Free’ means that all those entitled to vote have the right to be registered and to vote and must be free to make their choice. ‘Fair’ means that all registered political parties have an equal right to contest the elections, campaign for voter support and hold meetings and rallies².

Union State

The Union State, also referred to as the Union State of Russia and Belarus, is an international organization consisting of the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation.

Citizens of both parties are guaranteed the right to move and reside freely within the territory of the other party, allowing Belarusian citizens to travel freely in Russia and have the right to settle there to work or study, and vice versa³.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

¹ https://www.lexico.com/definition/public_ownership

² <https://www.civicsacademy.co.za/video/free-and-fair-elections/>

³ <https://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=21198>



General information

Belarus is a landlocked country in eastern Europe. It is bordered by Russia in the East by Latvia, Poland and Lithuania in the west and Ukraine in the South. After the Russian revolution of 1917 and a 5-year civil war Belarus became a founding constituent republic of the Soviet Union (Belarusian SSR). Belarus nowadays borders shaped after the Soviet invasion in Poland and the reintegration of Belarusian territories from Polish Republic.

Belarus has strong ties with the UN organization as it has been a founding member in 1945 along with USSR and the Ukrainian SSR. During the dissolution of Soviet Union, the Belarusian Parliament declared the sovereignty of Belarus on 27 of July 1990 and shortly after independence on 25 of August 1991.

Alexander Lukashenko



The main political figure of Belarus is Alexander Lukashenko, a former Soviet military man that has served as the first and only president of Belarus since 1994. Lukashenko 's government that is self-described as "authoritarian", has preserved a number of Soviet Union era policies in the financial scene such as state ownership of a large percentage of Belarusian economy.

Lukashenko's administration is stigmatized by vast violations of human rights and democratic liberties of Belarusian people, and a strong oppression against the opposition. Belarusian elections have never been considered fair by international organizations. Belarus is the last European country implementing the death penalty. In 2004, 2006, 2010 and 2020 elections Lukashenko's party averages an 80 % of the total voter's support. This fact and constant reports from the opposition parties that have many times declared the election un-free and unfair strengthens the doubts about Lukashenko's administration legitimacy. Since the disputed 2020 presidential election in Belarus, Lukashenko is no longer recognized as the legitimate president of the country. For all the reasons Lukashenko has been characterized as Europe's last dictator. In the last decades his rhetoric is notorious for its controversies, with clear nationalistic and homophobic insinuations often being a part of his official statements

Relations with Russian Federation

Belarus had always strong ties with Russian federation. Belarus escaped from the financial dead end in which many former Soviet states were trapped after the collapse of the Union like Russia Ukraine etc.



by implementing different economic strategies, a success that often is attributed to Lukashenko himself. After Russia's "recovery" and elevation as one of the biggest international powers, a treaty for greater cooperation was signed by Belarus and Russia in 2000 creating the Union State. Although the relations between the two countries are strong, numerous disputes emerged over the years. Lukashenko 's pro-Russian administration has always troubled the EE and the USA.

The 2020 conflict

In the 2020 elections the climate in Belarus has clearly changed. Svetlana Tikhanovskaya registered as a candidate in place of her arrested husband and managed drawing record crowds of people to support her frustrated by the lack of political evolution. When the voting day arrived the lack of independent observers, numerous documented irregularities and an internet blackout created the fear of fraud among the opposition. The final results suggested that Lukashenko has won the elections with 80% and Tinkhanovskaya gained only 10% of the votes according to official results. The opposition candidates insisted that the votes have been poorly counted. Ms. Tinkanovskaya was detained for several hours for her complaints and forced to leave for Lithuania with her children.

Since several days before the elections huge demonstrations were held, treated with police brutality and thousand arrests and imprisonments. This only produced new movements, and peaceful demonstrations of friends and relatives around the detention centers demanding news about the detainees. These events were followed by massive strikes in state owned corporations by the workers. The scales of protests in Belarus unprecedented. According to BBC more than 100 thousand have demonstrated in Minsk for several Sundays since the disputed 9 August election. More than 600 people are still detained.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Russian Federation

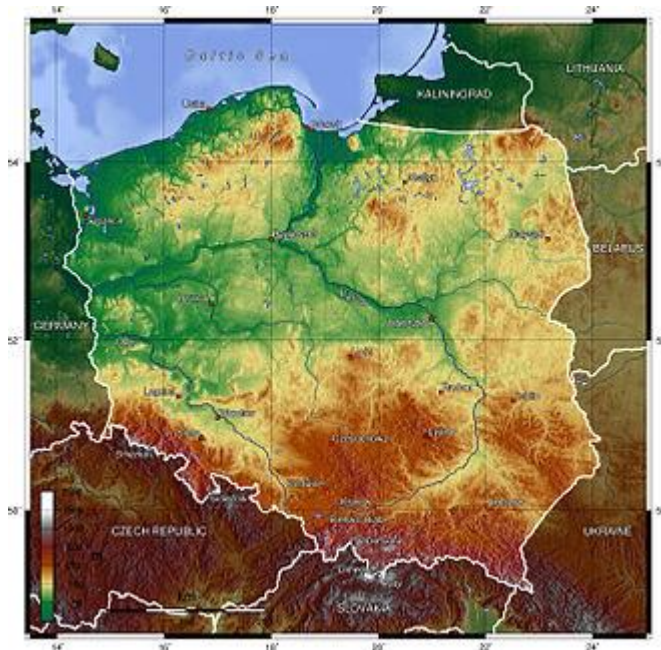
The Russian Federation could be characterized as Belarus closest ally. Not only the two countries share a common cultural heritage but also followed similar paths in their recent history. Both were under the Russian empire's rule and later after the revolution of 1917 members of the Soviet Union. Many of the highest ranked officials of the Union were Belarusian and Minsk, the nation's capital, became a major scientific educational and cultural center in the USSR. However, they shared a common planned economy, after the collapse of USSR Belarus managed to escape the financial catastrophe by preserving a state owned and planned economy while Russia struggled in its financial transition to a free market.

Shortly after Russia retrieved its place as a superpower and Belarusian pro-Russian Lukashenko's administration created strong ties. *The Commonwealth of Belarus and Russia* was founded on 2 April 1996 and a later treaty strengthen the alliance creating the *Union of*

Belarus and Russia in 1997. The goal was to harmonize the two states economies and create a context of cooperation. Lukashenko was accused of trying to exploit Russia's weak administration at the time to be named president of the Union. Of course, everything changed after Vladimir Putin being elected president of Russia in 2000. The strong political leader overpowered Lukashenko's influence in the region. Russia is still the main factor that in many cases defines the decisions and shapes the future of Belarus. Russia has a strong role to play in maintaining peace and stability and maybe a pro-Russian politician as Lukashenko in office.

Poland

Poland the last thirty years struggled to escape from the Soviet rule. A traditional enemy of Russia with complex historical differences to divide the two nations played the years following the USSR collapse the role of a true "Fortress of Europe " against the overwhelming migration rate and general impact of what was later named by many "the end of history". As a member of the EU Poland adopted politics and financial models that created a great distance from Belarus. Poland has many times be a destination for Lukashenko's political enemies and it is widely accepted that the influence of Poland in the European Parliament and in other political for a would affect the decision making regarding the Belarussian crisis



The USA

The USA has always been skeptical with the pro-Russian Lukashenko 's administration. The geopolitical status and the importance of Belarus in the gas export of Russia made the small country of Easter Europe an important concern. USA's efforts to the post-Soviet transition of the Easter block in an attempt of expanding its influence globally were in the case of Belarus blocked by the politics that were adopted. Nowadays the new Eastern interpretation of free market and international financial cooperation led by Russia have persuaded many Baltic states to join alliances and create relations with Russia far away from the influence of the western world. Belarus offered a lot in those Russia's attempts in the recent years by becoming a loyal and strong ally. The USA are likely to take advantage of the recent crises to promote a new West sided government that will destroy the foundations of a Russian ruled alliance in the region.



European Union

The reaction of the EU was immediate according to the Belarusian election crisis. Violence and totalitarianism of Lukashenko's administration was condemned, and sanctions were imposed regarding police violence and election frauds. According to the official statements of European Council members: "*The European Council fully supported the democratic right of the Belarusian people to elect their President through new free and fair elections, without external*

interference, and called on the Belarusian authorities to end violence and repression, release all detainees and political prisoners, respect media freedom and civil society, and start an inclusive national dialogue."

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of Event
1917	Russian Revolution,
1917-1922	Belarussian Civil war
1922	Belarus becomes an SSR
1991	Belarus Independence from USSR
1994	Alexander Lukashenko becomes the first president
2004,2006,2010, 2020	Alexander Lukashenko wins all the elections with 80%+ of the votes
2012	First UN involvement in the issue

UN INVOLVEMENT: RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

The United Nations hasn't been involved in the issue since for years it hasn't been an issue threatening world peace or other nations. On the other hand, the United Nations Human Rights Council began talks on the issue on the grounds of integrity of the citizens of Belarus



back in 2012. Belarus didn't abide by the clauses of the A/HRC/17/24 of 21 March 2011 resolution of the United Nations General Assembly. In 5 July 2012 with the clauses 3, 4 and 5 of the resolution A/HRC/RES/20/13 the United Nations decided to appoint a Special Rapporteur to Belarus to report on the situation and make recommendations for their improvement

and requested the Belarussian government to welcome the rapporteur.

On the 17th July 2020 the UNHRC voted on the resolution 44/19 on the situation of human rights in Belarus. With the clause numbered as 1 on the resolution UNHRC welcomed the report of the Special Rapporteur and with the clause 15 decided to extend his mandate for one more year for the purpose of submitting a report on the next (76th) version of the United Nations General Assembly. Furthermore, with the clause numbered as 4 the UNHRC urged the Belarusian government to guarantee a free and fair presidential election, emphasizing on the political rights of the citizens. The need of a report to the UNGA and the voting results of that resolution (20 in favor, 5 against and 20 abstentions) expressed the juxtaposition on the issue.

On 4th September 2020 (and after the election of Alexander Lukashenko) the opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaya who was forced to go into exile in neighbouring Lithuania, urged the UN via video link to send an international monitoring mission to Belarus immediately to "document the situation on the ground". The UN special rapporteur on Belarus, Anais Marin, told the UN meeting that Lukashenko's re-election was "completely manipulated" and "people's votes were stolen". In October 2020 the body's 47-member human rights council voted by 23 votes to two with 22 abstentions to adopt a resolution condemning human rights' violations in Belarus and requesting the UN high commissioner on Human Rights to take up the issue and report back to the council.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Since this topic has not been an issue for the last few years there is no high efficiency previous attempts to solve the issue. However, on 2nd October 2020 the European Union Council recognized the events after the Belarussian Elections imposed sanctions on the country including a travel ban and an asset freeze. The travel ban refers to a shortened list of people forbidden to travel in EU countries and the asset freeze to certain funds forbidden to invest in the EU. This is a temporary solution and more protects the EU, than solves the Belarussian issue.



POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The delegates should bear in mind that this issue reflects on Belarus, but there is no delegation of Belarus in this year's Security Council. Therefore, all clauses should focus on the

rehabilitation of peace in the country. Imposing sanctions is not a highly recommended solution, since no other nation has been harmed. One aspect that you might take into consideration is the education and public awareness of the citizens.

Another aspect worth looking into is the monitoring of the electoral process. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) - a Moscow-based organisation of USSR former member states - accepted Belarus' invitation to follow the 2020 election. However, Gloud, a former ODIHR member of observation missions to Belarus thinks they are "not credible observers". *"CIS is very biased and never contests the results. They are fully controlled by Moscow,"* she said.

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) provides help in cases of need for monitoring the elections and ensuring democratic legitimacy and protection of human rights. Gould reported fundamental differences in how CIS and ODIHR conduct a monitoring procedure. *"ODHIR recruits from many nationalities to prevent biases, and they do it openly, on their website, whereas CIS only hires nationals from the former Soviet area and there is no transparency over the recruitment process, we don't know where their analysts come from"* she explained in October 2020. As the experienced Security Council delegate must have been able to diagnose by now, guaranteeing fair and free future elections for the Belarusian population is an important matter.

However, we do not want the delegates to feel restrained by the ideas provided in this study guide. Make sure to check the bibliography for additional sources, do your own research, and we are certain that the ideas expressed during the debate will be both very creative and quite solid. Bear in mind that the Security Council is also entitled to take important decisions regarding recurrences that may occur and develop a real full-scale crisis. The future of Belarus is in your hands!

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Delegates can find all the UN resolutions mentioned at: <https://documents.un.org/prod/ods.nsf/home.xsp>.