

**FPS Chancellery of the Belgian Prime Minister**  
**Rue Ducale 4**  
**1000 Brussels**  
**Belgium**

**Subject: EFJ affiliates letter to European Heads of State and Government about the situation in Belarus**

*25 March 2021*

We, the leaders of journalists' unions and associations in Europe, write to you to express our deep concern about the intensification of repression in Belarus. We send you this appeal on this 25 March, which is Freedom Day in Belarus, when the opposition annually gathers in large numbers to honour the proclamation of the Belarusian People's Republic in 1918.

Today, there are over 250 political prisoners in the country, including 11 journalists. And this is just the tip of the iceberg. Since the fraudulent presidential elections of 9 August 2020, more than 30,000 people (including 480 journalists) have been detained, with many of them subjected to torture and ill-treatment, and over 1,000 people targeted by criminal prosecution.

We urge your government:

- to demand from the Belarusian authorities the immediate release of the 11 imprisoned journalists, the withdrawal of administrative and criminal proceedings against Belarusian journalists, and the reopening of the Minsk press club;
- to appeal to the United Nations, the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the European Union, so that the international community intensifies pressure and takes action in the face of constant violations of human rights and press freedom in Belarus.

Yours sincerely,

**Mogens Blicher Bjerregård**, President of the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ)

**Andrei Bastunets**, President of the Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ), Belarus

**Eike-Clemens Kullmann**, President of the Journalistengewerkschaft in der GPA-djp (GPA-djp), Austria

**Mushfig Alasgarli**, Chairman of the Journalist's Trade Union of Azerbaijan (JUHI), Azerbaijan

**Martine Simonis**, General Secretary of the Association des Journalistes Professionnels (AJP) and National Secretary of the Association Générale des Journalistes Professionnels de Belgique (AGJPB), Belgium

**Pol Deltour**, National Secretary of the Belgische / Vlaamse Vereniging van Journalisten (VVJ/AVBB), Belgium

**Borka Rudić**, Secretary General of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Journalists Association (BHJA), Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Maja Sever**, President of the Trade Union of Croatian Journalists (TUCJ), Croatia

**Hrvoje Zovko**, President of the Croatia Journalists' Association (CJA), Croatia

**George Frangos**, President of the Union of Cyprus Journalists (UCJ), Cyprus

**Çağdaş Ögüç**, Secretary of International Relations of Basın-Sen, Cyprus

**Adam Černý**, President of the Syndicate of Journalists of Czech Republic, Czechia

**Tine Johansen**, President of the Danish Union of Journalists (DJ), Denmark

**Helle Tiikmaa**, President of the Estonian Union of Journalists (EAL), Estonia

**Hanne Aho**, President of the Union of Journalists in Finland, Finland

**Emmanuel Vire**, General Secretary of Syndicat national de journalistes CGT (SNJ-CGT), France

**Frank Überall**, President of the Deutscher Journalisten-Verband (DJV), Germany

**Monique Hofmann**, Bundesgeschäftsführerin, Deutsche Journalistinnen- und Journalisten-Union (dju) in ver.di, Germany

**Maria Antoniadou**, President of the Journalists Union of the Athens Daily Newspapers (JUADN), Greece

**Elena Rizeakou**, President of the Panhellenic Federation of Journalists' Union (PFJU), Greece

**Nikolaos Karras**, President of the Journalists Union of Macedonia and Thrace (ESIEMTH), Greece

**László M. Lengyel**, Executive Chairman of the Hungarian Press Union (HPU), Hungary

**Raffaele Lorusso**, General Secretary of the Federazione Nazionale Stampa Italiana (FNSI), Italy

**Anna Del Freo**, Deputy General Secretary of the FNSI, Italy

**Dainius Radzevičius**, President of the Lithuanian Journalists' Union (LŽS), Lithuania

**Ines Kurschat**, President of the Association Luxembourgeoise des Journalistes Professionnels (ALJP), Luxembourg

**Nigel Mifsud**, General Secretary of the Institute of Maltese Journalists (IGM), Malta

**Renske Heddema**, President of the Nederlandse Vereniging van Journalisten (NVJ), The Netherlands

**Dag Idar Tryggestad**, President of the Norwegian Union of Journalists, Norway

**Krzysztof Skowroński**, President of the Polish Association of Journalists (SDP), Poland

**Seweryn Blumsztajn**, President of the Society of Journalists, Poland

**Sofia Branco**, President of Sindicato dos Jornalistas (SJ), Portugal

**Leonard Octavian Pădureț**, President of the Federation Culture & Mass-Media FAIR-MediaSind, Romania

**Cristinel Godinac**, President of the Romanian Trade Union of Journalists MediaSind, Romania

**Dragana Čabarkapa**, President of the Journalist Union of Serbia (Sinos), Serbia

**Zeljko Bodrozic**, President of the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (IJAS), Serbia

**Daniel Modrovsky**, President of Slovensky Syndikat Novinarov (SSN), Slovakia

**Petra Lesjak Tušek**, President of the Slovene Association of Journalists (DNS), Slovenia

**Nemesio Rodríguez**, President of the Federación de Asociaciones de Periodistas de España (FAPE), Spain

**Ulrika Hyllert**, President of the Swedish Journalists' Union (SJ), Sweden

**Mustafa Kuleli**, General Secretary of Türkiye Gazeteciler Sendikası (TGS), Turkey

**Yusuf Kanli**, Vice-Chairman of Gazeteciler Cemiyeti Derneği (GCD), Turkey

**Özge Yurttaş**, General Secretary of DİSK Basın İş, Turkey

**Sergiy Tomilenko**, President of the National Union of journalists of Ukraine (NUJU), Ukraine

**Serhiy Shturkhetskyy**, Chairman of the Independent Media Trade-Union of Ukraine (IMTUU), Ukraine

**Michelle Stanistreet**, National Union of Journalists General Secretary (NUJ), United Kingdom