Беларуская нацыянальная платформа
Форум грамадзянскай супольнасці
Усходняга партнёрства

Statement

of Belarusan National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

of solidarity with the human rights defender Elena Tonkacheva

Minsk, 3 November 2014

We, participants of the Belarusan National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, express our concern because the human rights defender, chairperson of the Board of the Legal Transformation Center (Lawtrend) Elena Tonkacheva's residence permit in Belarus has been cancelled.

Since 1985, Elena Tonkacheva, citizen of the Russian Federation, has been living in Belarus where she finished school, received higher jurisprudential education, has a constant residence and a job, family and property. We know Elena Tonkacheva as an active figure of civil society, qualified expert, and leader of the human rights defending organization. For 20 years, she and her organization have rendered professional legal and expert support to numerous non-commercial organizations in Belarus and people in the situations when human rights have been infringed. The formal basis for the residence permit abolition is the facts that Elena Tonkacheva broke traffic regulations (she insignificantly exceeded the speed limit).

We think that the decision to cancel the residence permit and the threat to expel her from the territory of our country is a politically motivated and disproportionate sanction in comparison with the danger of the committed misdoing. The real basis is Elena Tonkacheva's political position and active human rights defending activity.

Therefore:

1. We address to the Citizenship and Migration Department of the Municipal Department of Internal Affairs of the Minsk City Executive Committee and the Citizenship and Migration Department of the Pieršamajski Regional Office of Internal Affairs of Minsk with the petition to renew Elena Tonkacheva's residence permit in Belarus;

2. We address to the EU Office in Belarus, diplomatic missions of the EU countries and the USA, the UN Office in Belarus, other international organizations and structures, with the request to provide any possible support to Elena Tonkacheva and to stop the process of extraditing the human rights defender;

3. We address to civil societies of the countries of the Eastern Partnership and the EU countries with the request to demonstrate active solidarity with Elena Tonkacheva;

4. We also address to participants of the Belarusan National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, activists of public organizations of Belarus and all non-indifferent citizens of our country to demonstrate solidarity and we ask:

- to sign and send by post the petition to the Citizenship and Migration Department of the Municipal Department of Internal Affairs of the Minsk City Executive Committee (Minsk, Independence ave., 48b) and the Citizenship and Migration Department of the Pieršamajski Regional Office of Internal Affairs of Minsk (Minsk, Bialinskaha Street, 10) with the request not to expel Elena Tonkacheva from Belarus and to renew her residence permit (sample: http://www.lawtrend.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Hodatajstvo_Elena-Tonkacheva.docx);

- to sign the petition at the office of the Legal Transformation Center (Minsk, Navavilenskaja Street, 38-10), as well as at the offices of our colleagues — the Human Rights Defending Center Viasna (Spring) (Minsk, Miaržynskaha Street, 8-26), and the Belarusan People's Front Party (Minsk, Čarnyšeŭskaha Street, 3-39);

- to send the petition by fax: the Citizenship and Migration Department of the Municipal Department of Internal Affairs of the Minsk City Executive Committee — fax: +375-17-331-81-68, the Citizenship and Migration Department of the Pieršamajski Regional Office of Internal Affairs of Minsk — fax: +375-17-280-01-62;

- to come to support Elena Tonkacheva on Wednesday, 5 November 2014, 11:30 a.m., to the building of the Regional Office of Internal Affairs of the Pieršamajski Administration of Minsk (Minsk, Bialinskaha Street, 10), where the question of extraditing Elena Tonkacheva will be considered.

Signatures:

Andrei Yahorau, Chairperson of the Coordination Committee of the Belarusan National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF); Centre for European Transformation;

Yaroslav Bekish, Member of the Coordination Committee of the Belarusan National Platform of the EaP CSF; Environmental Fellowship "Green Alliance";

Aksana Shelest, Member of the Coordination Committee of the Belarusan National Platform of the EaP CSF; Humanitarian Techniques Agency;

Natallia Vasilevich, Member of the Coordination Committee of the Belarusan National Platform of the EaP CSF; Initiative FORB partnership on expertise and law;

Tatiana Poshevalova, Member of the Coordination Committee of the Belarusan National Platform of the EaP CSF; Public Association "Center for social innovations";

Ihar Rynkevich, Member of the Coordination Committee of the Belarusan National Platform of the EaP CSF; Enlightenment Institution "Democracy Development League "Civic Verdict";

Dmitry Gomenyuk, Information and Enlightenment Institution "GEDEUS";

Aleh Hulak, Belarusan Helsinki Committee;

Uladzislau Vialichka, International Consortium "EuroBelarus";

Uladzimir Matskevich, International Consortium "EuroBelarus";

Tatsiana Vadalazhskaya, Humanitarian Technologies Agency;

Andrei Shutau, Centre for European Transformation;

Vladimir Dounaev, Public Bologna Committee;

Svetlana Matskevich, Public Bologna Committee;

Dmitry Karpievich, Association of Life-Long Learning Education and Enlightenment;

Dina Shavtsova, Initiative FORB partnership on expertise and law;

Miraslau Kobasa, Enlightenment Public Association “Leu Sapieha Foundation”;

Ihar Lalkou, Public Association “BPF” Adradzhenne";

Daria Vashkevich, the Executive Bureau of the Assembly of Pro-Democratic NGOs of Belarus;

Ales’ Krot, Human Right Group “Students’ Council”;

Nastassia Dol, The Society of Belarusan Students;

Svetlana Koroleva, Agency for Civil Society Development and Cooperation;

Tatsiana Reviaka, Human Rights Centre “Viasna”;

Aliaksandr Karalevich, Public Union “Education Center “POST”;

Iryna Zhykhar, National Public Association “Belarusan Organization of Working Women”;

Piotr Kuzniatsou, Homel Democratic Forum;

Yury Hubarevich, Movement “For Freedom”;

Tatyana Novikova, The Belarusan Antinuclear Campaign, Public Association “Ecohome”;

Tatsiana Zialko, Public Association of Belarusan Pensioners “Our Generation”;

Aliaksandr Zialko, Public Association of Belarusan Pensioners “Our Generation”;

Leonid Kalitenya, Public Association “Center for social innovations”

Sergey Drozdovsky, Enlightenment Human Rights Establishment “Office for the Rights of People with Disabilities”;

Ina Kulei, Enlightenment Charity Establishment “Committee “Salidarnasc’”;

RADA Belarusan National Youth Council.