

ESIB - The National Unions of Students in Europe

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ESIB calls out to all European Governments to take action on the illegal arrests and the disgraceful situation in Belarus.

ESIB once again states its concern about the current situation in Belarus, following the presidential elections. Yesterday ESIB Executive Member, Tatsiana Khoma, and fellow student, Volha Kuzmich were detained for 10 days in prison following the peaceful protest held in October Square. An additional 106 other people were detained for the same reason. ESIB condemns this undemocratic act as a direct violation of human rights and the reports claiming that many of the detainees are in need of medical assistance sheds an even more troubling light on the current plight of these people.

ESIB urges all European Governments to stand up and voice their opinion on this issue. The Belarusian people have long been suffering for voicing their opinion under the dictatorship rule of Lukashenka. Such a situation should be unacceptable for any democratic European country. ESIB calls out for concrete action to be taken by all European countries on this issue and we believe that sanctions should be ordered on the officials who so flagrantly disregard Human Rights in Belarus.

The arrest of Taciana, Volha and the other 106 Belarusians is a clear act of disregard to the statement issued by the EU Council at their meeting on General Affairs and External Relations last Monday. The statement urged *“the Belarusian authorities to allow the people of Belarus to exercise their right of assembly and freedom of expression in line with their OSCE commitments and cautioned the government not to threaten or detain those exercising their political rights in the coming days and beyond.”* ESIB questions the resolve of the European Union to solve these matters in Belarus – and asks what will be done now that the EU’s various calls have not only been unheeded but actively contravened.

ESIB also urges the European Governments to find out what is the current situation of the abovementioned detainees – and to pressure the Belarusian Authorities in order that they are released without threat to their life and health.

ESIB once again pledges its full support for the students in Belarus. ESIB urges the students of Europe to voice their opinion on the predicament of fellow Belarusian Students. More than ever is there the need to solidify our efforts to fight for Human Rights in Belarus.

ESIB will be keep a constant eye on the situation of Tatsiana, Volha and other detainees as well as the students who have approached ESIB after being expelled from their universities for purely political reasons. ESIB will be coordinating with all its member unions and European partners to raise awareness and pressure governments to act on these issues.

For more information and to keep informed on ESIB’s action, we welcome you to visit www.esib.org. For any queries email ESIB on secretariat@esib.org

Justin Fenech
ESIB Chairperson 2006

ESIB - the National Unions of Students in Europe is the umbrella organisation of 45 national unions of students from 34 countries and through these members represent over 10 million students. The aim of ESIB is to represent and promote the educational, social, economic and cultural interests of students at a European level towards all relevant bodies and in particular the European Union, Council of Europe and UNESCO.