

Belarus: fourth package of EU sanctions over enduring repression and the forced landing of a Ryanair flight



European Union agrees Belarus sanctions

The Council today decided to impose restrictive measures against **78** Belarusian **individuals** and **8 entities**. **This decision was made in view of the escalation of serious human rights violations** in Belarus and the violent repression of civil society, democratic opposition and journalists. Moreover, seven individuals and one entity subject to this new round of restrictive measures were designated in connection to the **forced and unlawful landing of a Ryanair flight** in Minsk, Belarus, on 23 May 2021, endangering aviation safety, and the detention by Belarusian authorities of journalist Raman **Pratasevich** and Sofia **Sapega**. Among those targeted are also several prominent business figures who support and benefit from the Lukashenko regime. These sanctions therefore send a further strong signal to the backers of the regime, that their continued support for Aleksandr Lukashenko comes at a substantial cost.

The EU does not stand alone in its response to the crisis in Belarus; we are united in our action with our likeminded partners.

EU restrictive measures on Belarus now apply to a total of 166 persons and 15 entities. Those designated are subject to an **asset freeze and EU citizens and companies are forbidden from making funds available to those listed**. Natural persons are additionally subject to a travel ban, which impedes them from **entering or transiting** through EU territories.

On 24 and 25 May 2021, the European Council adopted conclusions in which it strongly condemned the forced landing of the Ryanair flight, and called on the Council to adopt additional listings of persons and entities as soon as possible on the basis of the relevant sanctions framework. Consequently, on 4 June the Council decided to introduce a ban on the overflight of EU airspace and on access to EU airports by Belarusian carriers of all kinds.

The goal of these sanctions is to put pressure on the Belarusian political leadership to initiate a **genuine and inclusive national dialogue** with broader society and to **avoid further repression**.

The EU stands ready to support a **peaceful, democratic transition** with a variety of instruments, including a **comprehensive plan of economic support** for a democratic Belarus. We also stand ready to adopt further measures, including on other economic actors, if the situation in Belarus does not improve.

The relevant legal acts, including the names of the persons concerned, have

been published in the Official Journal.

[Visit the meeting page](#)

Memorandum of understanding to foster cooperation between Mexico and ECDC in prevention and control of infectious diseases

The current COVID-19 pandemic has underlined the importance of close collaboration across the globe and sharing of data and knowledge to understand and effectively respond to new threats. To this end, the new MoU establishes the terms under which the signatories will cooperate in prevention and control of communicable diseases.

ECDC Director Dr. Andrea Ammon said:

“I am very pleased to be signing this collaboration agreement between ECDC and the Ministry of Health of Mexico today. The only way towards increased health security globally is through strengthened cooperation and alignment. We welcome Mexico among our closest partners. We are looking forward to working jointly for the benefit and protection of health of all people in Europe and Mexico.”

The Secretary of Health of Mexico, Dr. Jorge Alcocer Varela, highlighted that

“the MoU will strengthen relations with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control on epidemiological surveillance, in addition to promoting actions focused on the benefit of the population. I am sure that the joint effort will allow us to mitigate future health emergencies and, in due course, to avoid catastrophic sanitary issues such as the one we unfortunately suffered due to COVID-19”. He pointed out that, “at this critical point of the pandemic we have found the opportunity to strengthen our cooperation.”

The MoU covers mutual exchange of information, particularly in the event of a public health emergency, envisages consultations on emerging health threats that may affect or concern Mexico or Europe, and provides for more active participation in congresses, conferences, symposia, meetings and scientific

workshops organized by the signatories. In addition, it establishes ground for exchanges of personnel as well as educational and teaching materials.

The MoU was signed on 21 June 2021 in a virtually held ceremony by Dr Jorge Alcocer Varela, Secretary of Health of Mexico and Dr Andrea Ammon, Director of ECDC, in the presence of honorary witnesses, Ms Martha Delgado, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, and Ambassador Mauricio Escanero, Head of the Mission of Mexico to the EU.

Publication of the Annual Report 2020

The European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA) has published its [Annual Report 2020](#), setting out its activities and achievements of the past year.

In a year dominated by COVID-19, EIOPA played a key role in insurance and pensions supervision in Europe.

EIOPA's actions related to COVID-19 ranged from putting in place immediate measures to enable the sector to focus on business continuity and obligations to policyholders and beneficiaries, to providing information directly to consumers on what they should expect from their insurance company. In addition, in the area of financial stability, EIOPA issued Statement on dividends distribution and variable remuneration policies in the context of COVID-19.

In the area of consumer protection, EIOPA continued to strengthen its work in the area of conduct of business supervision, including defining the approach to the supervision of product oversight and governance.

A key achievement in insurance supervision was the publication of the Opinion on the review of Solvency II, which reflected a balanced approach taking account of the challenging times, including the impact of COVID-19 on the insurance sector.

In terms of financial stability, in 2020, EIOPA focused its effort on monitoring and mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Examples of work in this area included the Statement on dividends distribution and variable remuneration policies in the context of COVID-19, the Risk Dashboard and regular monitoring and reporting on financial stability.

Progress was made in the area of pensions, notably finalising the regulation for the Pan-European Personal Pensions product, or PEPP, as well as furthering work in the areas of the pensions dashboard and pensions tracking system. All three will be important in closing pensions gaps.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the use of digital technology by consumers

and businesses and EIOPA continued to advance its work in this area, where the overarching aim is to enable consumer to benefit from digital innovation, but without detriment.

Considerable progress was also made in the area of sustainable finance, including supporting the development of the EU taxonomy, and a range of activities in the area of climate change.

Looking ahead, the role of insurers and pension funds in the economic recovery from COVID-19 cannot be underestimated as both sectors will play an important role in fostering green and digital transitions and fostering a Capital Markets Union. EIOPA will therefore continue to support these priorities in the coming year.

[Read the report](#)

Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the alignment of certain countries concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Belarus



On 4 June 2021, the Council adopted Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/908^[1] amending Council Decision 2012/642/CFSP.

The Council Decision decided to strengthen the existing restrictive measures in view of the situation in Belarus by introducing a ban on the overflight of EU airspace and on access to EU airports by Belarusian carriers of all kinds.

The Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania^[2], and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this Council Decision.

They will ensure that their national policies conform to this Council Decision.

The European Union takes note of this commitment and welcomes it.

^[1] Published on 04.06.2021 in the Official Journal of the European Union no.

LI 197, p.3

^[2] The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

[Press briefing ahead the European Council meeting of 24 and 25 June 2021](#)



The press briefing ahead of the European Council meeting of 24 and 25 June 2021 will take place via video conference on **Wednesday 23 June 2021 at 14.00**

English and French interpretation will be available.

This briefing is “off the record”.

In order to follow the briefing and to be able to ask questions remotely, EU accredited journalists and journalists who had a EUCO accreditation from June 2019 European Council meeting or later, can register using [this form](#).

Journalists who already registered for high-level press conferences (European Councils, international summits) in 2020 or 2021 **don't need to register again**.

Deadline: Wednesday 23 June, 12.00

Further instructions will be sent to all registered participants approximately half an hour before the briefing.

[Visit the meeting page](#)