

45

Evelina Louren



**Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Belarus  
4 May 2015  
Intervention by the delegation of Estonia**

Estonia welcomes the delegation of the Republic of Belarus. We thank for the report presented earlier and also for the additional information given in the opening speech.

Estonia has taken note of the Belarus' authorities' increased readiness to engage in discussions about human rights. Estonia would like to encourage Belarus to keep this more open approach in discussing human rights issues. Regrettably Belarus' cooperation with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus, Mr. Miklós Haraszti has not been as constructive as we hoped, and the general situation of the human rights in Belarus has not improved substantially.

We remain concerned with regard to guaranteeing fundamental freedoms, inter alia the freedom of expression, including online, and the freedom of assembly. We would particularly like to emphasize the urgency of immediate and unconditional release of all those who have been detained for the peaceful exercise of their rights.

With a view to the upcoming political events we would like to urge the authorities of Belarus to ensure that peaceful demonstrators are not imprisoned, harassed or ill-treated by police for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. We consider it necessary that Belarus complies with all UN Human Rights Committee decisions and brings the legislation related to freedom of association in line with international standards.

Estonia also urges Belarus to promptly introduce a moratorium on all executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty.

Estonia would like to recommend to the Government of Belarus:

- To carry out public campaigns explaining the arguments for the abolition of the death penalty with the aim to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR;
- to immediately and unconditionally release all those who have been detained solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression and assembly;
- To amend the law on public association and mass gathering as well as media legislation to comply with international standards, including by decriminalizing defamation.-

Estonia wishes you success in implementing these measures.

Thank you.