Question for written answer E-000946/2021

to the Commission

Rule 138

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Subject: Support for students from Belarus to study at universities in the EU

In Belarus, thousands are struggling for democracy, as violent protests continue to rage. In a desperate attempt to curb the young protesters’ activities, Lukashenko called for those publicly supporting the protests to be dismissed from their studies and jobs.

The EU needs to act fast. Those who fight for democratic values cannot be punished by stripping them of their right to education, and drafting them for military service.

Therefore, we welcome the EU4Belarus programme pledging to contribute EUR 24 million to reinforcing resilience and empowering civil society in Belarus, of which EUR 8 million will go to scholarships and stipends for study in the EU.

Unfortunately, the basis for the distribution of these funds is still unknown, so the money is still waiting to be allocated. Hence, we ask the following questions:

1. When will this support be operationalised so that the students can access it and avoid reprisals?

2. What will the distribution be based on? Will previous credible efforts to help persecuted Belarusian students be taken into account, e.g. as a condition for universities to be eligible for granting stipends?

3. Will there also be flexibility to allow recipients to obtain support for language or preparatory studies?