**ADVANCE QUESTIONS TO BELARUS (FIRST BATCH)**

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

* The August 9, 2020, presidential elections in Belarus were not free or fair, and were marred by restrictions on ballot access for candidates, prohibition of local independent observers at polling stations, intimidation tactics employed against opposition candidates, and the detention of peaceful protesters, union leaders, and journalists. How does Belarus plan to meet the demands of Belarusian civil society for free and fair elections? When will Belarus engage in genuine dialogue with civil society to determine a path forward?
* Since the presidential election, Belarusian authorities have continued to use force against members of the opposition, peaceful protesters, union activists and journalists. What steps does the Government of Belarus propose to hold accountable those responsible for abuses?
* Since the presidential election, Belarusian authorities have continued to target journalists for detention and violence and cut Internet access within the country. What steps is the Government of Belarus taking to ensure that individuals working for independent media organizations receive accreditation and are able to exercise their right to freedom of expression, both online and offline?

**SWEDEN**

* What does the Republic of Belarus aim to do in order to ensure free and fair elections monitored by independent observers, with efficient electoral commissions and transparent vote counting?
* What measures are being taken to investigate the reports of torture, sexual violence and other ill-treatment against persons detained by the Belarusian security forces in the days following the 9 August 2020 and to hold those responsible to account?
* What does the Republic of Belarus aim to do in order to ensure that the right to freedom of expression is respected, including by refraining from arbitrary and disproportionate interventions?
* What steps does the Republic of Belarus aim to take to align itself with the practice of all other European states on the matter of the death penalty?

**SLOVENIA**

* When will the Belarus Government amend national legislation by including a definition of hate speech in line with the Convention?
* We would be interested to learn what steps have been undertaken towards phasing out the death penalty?

**UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND**

* What is Belarus doing to ensure freedom of expression, to improve media freedom and to create space for independent media workers to operate without fear of harassment or repercussions?
* What measures will the Belarusian authorities take to protect detainees from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and to hold to account those who perpetrate such acts?
* When will Belarus implement the OSCE recommendations on electoral reform in order to guarantee the right of the people of Belarus to freely express their will through genuine elections, in line with Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights?
* Can Belarus explain the measures it will take to permit all citizens to assemble and freely express their views?
* When will the Government of Belarus abolish the death penalty and what steps are being taken to promote informed discussion on the merits of abolition?

**GERMANY**

* When will Belarus change the "Law on Political Parties", the "Decree on Activities of Political Parties, Trade Unions, Other Social Action Organisations", the "Regulations on State Registration of Political Parties, Trade Unions and Other Social Action Organisations and their Unions", "Presidential Decree No. 5 of 31 August 2015 on Foreign Gratuitous Aid" and the ensuing Regulations on the” Procedures for the Receipt, Recording, Registration and Use of Foreign Gratuitous Aid, the Monitoring of its Receipt and Intended Use, and the Registration of Humanitarian Programmes" in order to allow

a) for effective registration of political parties, independent trade unions and social action organisations without obstacles,

b) the organisations to organize or hold assemblies, rallies, street marches, demonstrations, pickets or strikes, or to produce or distribute campaign materials, hold seminars or carry out other forms of political and mass campaigning work among the population, and

c) for an end of restrictions on the organisations' funding?

* What steps -and in which timeframe- will Belarusian authorities take to investigate reports of the use of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment and arbitrary detentions by security forces, notably in correctional facilities, following the excessive use of force against peaceful protesters related to the presidential elections 2020?
* How does Belarus plan on collaborating with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus, including by the provision of unhindered access to Belarus, including all places of detention, in order to establish a comprehensive and balanced report on the human rights situation in Belarus?
* Does Belarus intend to create a National Human Rights Institution and adopt a National Action Plan on Human Rights?
* Why has Belarus, a State Party to the Convention against Torture, not signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention?