

## Threats on the European Youth Parliament in Belarus - young volunteers face interrogations

**Berlin, 02.11.2021** – Following the official liquidation of the National Committee representing the European Youth Parliament in Belarus by the government, the Belarusian KGB has actively started to target young people involved in activities of the youth organisation by conducting interrogations. The network as one of the biggest youth-led organisations in Europe stands in full solidarity with its affected members and participants and calls for political action to stop the threats made to young activists.

**The European Youth Parliament (EYP)**, working under the umbrella of the Schwarzkopf Foundation, is an organisation based on values of democracy and pluralism and strives to empower young people across the whole continent in more than 40 countries to become active citizens and to execute their civil rights. In the past week more than ten young people who happened to be involved in the most recent event of EYP Belarus were interrogated by the State Security Committee of the Republic of Belarus. The event gathered around 40 young Europeans for four days in Kyiv in October after initially it was planned to be held in Minsk. Volunteers involved in carrying out the event and some participants have been abducted from their homes and universities without a lawyer or access to any legal help being provided. Those affected included underage minors. Now these young people and their families have to worry about their future and safety. Young people affiliated with EYP were expelled from their education and had to relocate from the country.

**Darya Skorokhod, the President of EYP Belarus** explains: *“Our active members who were based in Belarus have been taken for a KGB interrogation without any notifications or official reasons behind. They were mainly asked questions about the organisational process of the event, its financing sources and sponsors, as well as the Board structure and the political views of people involved. The lawyer explains that the criminal case can be opened anytime once they have enough information to come up with one. As for now, we are waiting for the updates, but two people had to relocate from the country already. I am condemning the actions of the Belarusian authorities and calling for them to stop the pressure by interrogating them purely for being a part of EYP.”*

The Governing Body of the EYP Network, as its international board, reacts to the threats: *“When I attended the relocated Minsk event, I talked to teenagers who could not return home, whose families are spread in different countries. As someone who does not have to fear such consequences for simply being part of this youth organisation, it is shocking and saddening to learn about individuals from our network facing interrogations and even fearing persecution. We express our fullest solidarity with our National Committee in Belarus and all those affected. We are condemning and denouncing the*

*actions of the Belarusian authorities. And once more, we demand an immediate end to the threats.*”, says **Janis Fifka, member of the Governing Body**.

The Schwarzkopf Foundation stands with EYP Belarus and supports the statement of the Governing Body of EYP: *“We observe the state intimidation of young volunteers with great concern and call on European decision-makers to show solidarity and work to protect young people who are fighting for democracy.”*, says **Mandy Buschina, Director of the Schwarzkopf Foundation**.

More information about EYP Belarus and recent developments can be found here on their [Instagram channel](#). The Governing Body of the EYP released a full statement [here](#).

**The European Youth Parliament** is one of the largest youth organisations in Europe, by young people for young people. The network connects youth across borders and offers spaces for political debates, personal development, and the exchange of ideas.

**The Schwarzkopf Foundation Young Europe** works for a Europe of openness, solidarity and democracy shaped by young people. In events, educational programmes and youth-led networks, the Foundation offers young Europeans opportunities for encounter and exchange, personal development and active democratic participation.

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