

Belarus: Statement by the Spokesperson on limiting the diplomatic presence of Lithuania

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On Tuesday, Belarusian authorities ordered Head of Mission at the Embassy of Lithuania in Minsk and the Consul General in Hrodna to leave the country by 11 July, drastically limiting Vilnius' diplomatic presence in the country.

With this, the Lukashenko regime is closing further diplomatic channels of communication. By also reducing the consular staff of EU member states' diplomatic missions, the regime limits the opportunities for the Belarusians to travel to the EU. Already last October, at the request of the regime, the Lithuanian and Polish Ambassadors left the country, and in May this year the entire staff of Latvia's embassy in Minsk was ordered to leave. Most recently, the Belarusian authorities asked the Head of the EU Delegation in Minsk to return to Brussels for consultations.

By these actions, the regime further isolates itself. Such decisions are also detrimental to Belarus and its population. Keeping diplomatic channels of communication open in time of difficulties is crucial. The EU calls on the Belarusian authorities to allow full presence of the EU's and its Member States' diplomatic missions to allow diplomacy to work.