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## Belarus: EPP President supports Polish and Lithuanian universities initiative

Brussels, 11 January 2011



The President of the European People's Party (EPP), **Wilfried Martens**, met earlier today with Belarusian opposition leader **Aliaksandr Milinkevic** and discussed ways which Europe should respond to the post-election crackdown of Belarusian authorities on opposition leaders and protesters:

"I had the opportunity to review today with Aliaksandr Milinkevic the current situation in Belarus and discuss possible responses from the European Union. The appalling incidents of last month have reminded Europe that Belarus is led by a pariah administration, which exercises complete disrespect to democratic values and the rule of law.

"I've also been informed that Belarusian universities intend to expel students that have actively participated in opposition demonstrations. I welcome the initiative of Polish and Lithuanian universities to open their doors to Belarusian students in case they are expelled, and I call on universities in all EU Member States to embrace this initiative and for the European Commission to offer assistance. I think that we in Europe have to support in every way possible Belarusian civil society, if we hope to see in the future a democratic Belarus," underlined the EPP President.

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### Note to editors:

The EPP is the largest and most influential European-level political party of the centre-right, which currently includes 73 member-parties from 39 countries, the Presidents of the Commission, Council, and Parliament, 14 EU and 6 non-EU heads of state and government, 13 members of the European Commission and the largest Group in the European Parliament.

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