



A NEW CHAPTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

A handbook on issues of transition
from the Commission on Human Rights
to the Human Rights Council



Annex 3.1

Special Rapporteur On the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus

Current mandate holder: Adrian Severin **Term of mandate holder:** 2004
Mandate started: 2004 **Mandate up for renewal:** 2006

Background and areas of focus

- Established to investigate credible reports related to political oppression, forced disappearance, summary execution, arbitrary arrest and detention, restrictions on religious organisations, and harassment of members of civil society organisations;
- Examine the human rights situation in Belarus and follow progress made towards the elaboration of a program of human rights education for all sectors of society, in particular law enforcement, the judiciary, prison officials and civil society;
- Gathers information through visits to neighbouring countries; through discussions and consultations with representatives of Belarusian human rights and other civil society organisations, the United Nations and specialised agencies, the European Union, the Council of Europe and diplomats; and through media reports and documentary sources.

Cooperation with the Government

- The Government has not responded favourably to the mandate holder's request to visit the country and in general does not cooperate with him in the fulfilment of his mandate;
- The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Belarus to the United Nations has responded twice to the Special Rapporteur's reports, offering information on strengthening international security, arms control and disarmament¹, and on social and economic developments in Belarus².

Key developments

- In 2005, there has been a dramatic deterioration of the situation of human rights, characterised by the Government's refusal to enter into dialogue with other political parties and civil society, denial of civil rights and repression of political freedoms, persecution of opponents to regime, and the use of the judiciary, law enforcement and security agencies as instruments of political repression;
- The regime has reinforced its authoritarian character and intensified official State doctrine, which is generally directed against the consolidation of the Belarusian national identity;
- The Government of Belarus is working to obstruct cooperation with the international community in the future by the introduction of a new article in the Criminal Code which prohibits the submission to international organisations of "false information" on the situation in the country.

Country visits

Estonia (2005)
Latvia (2004, (2005)
Lithuania (2004, 2005)
Poland (2004, 2005)

¹ E/CN.4/2005/G/27

² E/CN.4/2005/G/28

Pending reports

Annual Report (E/CN.4/2006/36).

Communications to the Government of Belarus (2005)

- Three communications sent;
- Four joint communications sent;
- Two press releases issued.