

February 3, 2012

Statement by the Office for a Democratic Belarus regarding the visa ban

Given that considering economic sanctions is a longer process, there are Belarusian organisations and individuals who believe that revising the list of Belarusian officials under the visa ban may facilitate an earlier release of the of the remaining political prisoners.

Due to the worry about the fate of the political prisoners the Office for a Democratic Belarus (ODB) voiced to the EU institutions an opinion to revise the names on the current visa ban list. The Office suggested those who could be regarded as potential candidates for exclusion. ODB believes that revision of the list will send a credible signal that the EU stays flexible in its policy of promoting change in Belarus and does not try to isolate Belarus as a whole. Simultaneously ODB suggested adding names to the visa ban list of those involved into Ales Bialiatsky's case and responsible for repressive legislative amendments recently adopted.

The list of revised names including those suggested for exclusion and addition was done in consultation with Belarusian and international civil society groups whose names can only be disclosed with their agreement.