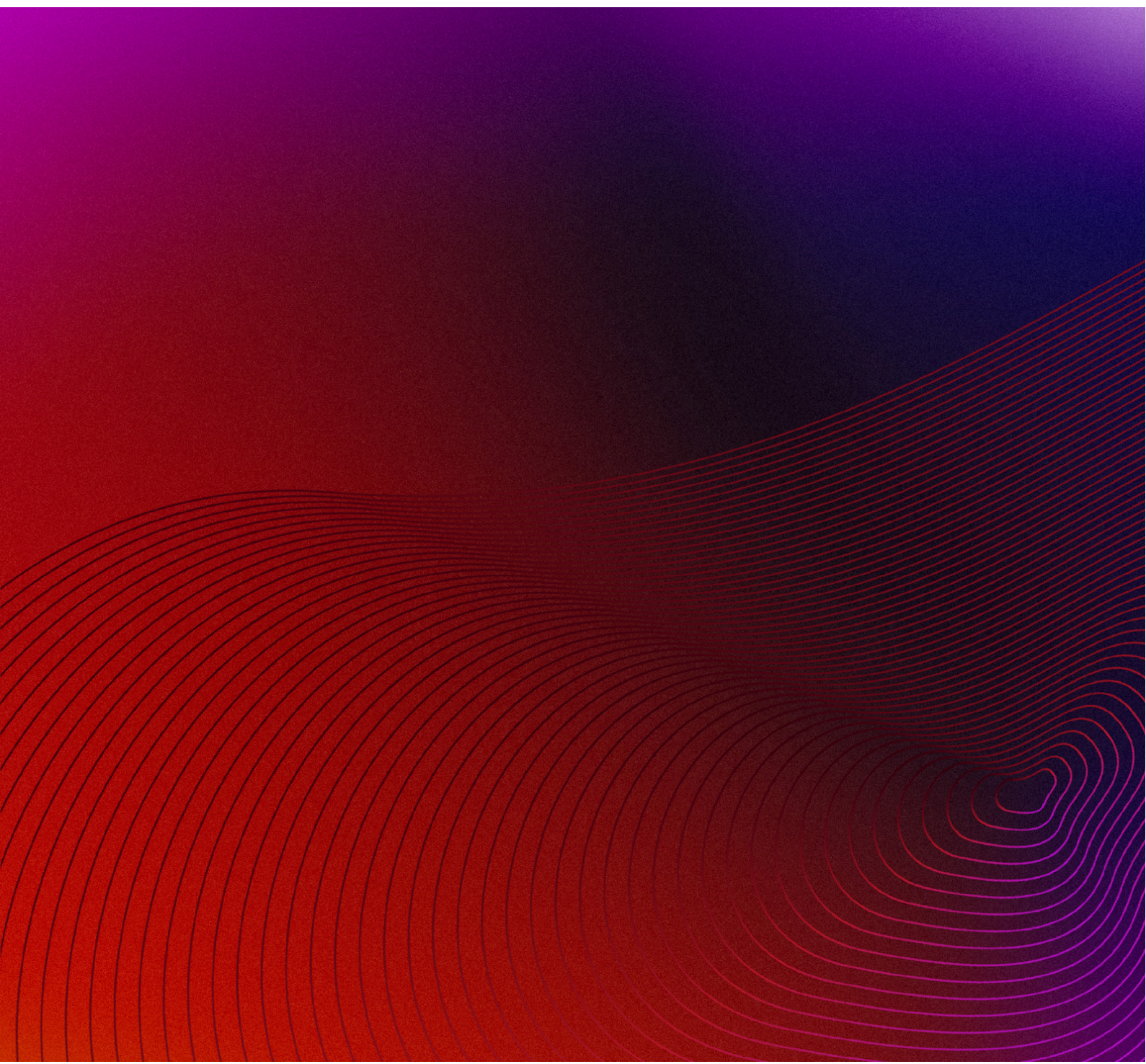


On the Role of Youth in Combating Authoritarianism and Defending Democracy in Belarus

Draft Resolution by the Democratic Forces of Belarus



New Belarus Conference, August 2025

We, the democratic forces of Belarus,

- taking into account the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- taking into account the European Convention on Human Rights;
- taking into account the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- taking into account the EU Guidelines on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders;
- taking into account the European Youth Strategy and the EU Youth Dialogue;
- taking into account the deterioration of the situation of youth rights under the authoritarian regime in Belarus;

Considering the following circumstances:

- A. Youth in Belarus are subjected to systemic repression, including arbitrary detentions, expulsions from universities, forced conscription, indoctrination and persecution, active involvement of state ideologists and KGB operatives in educational institutions, and coercion of students to inform on their peers;
- B. Young people make up one of the largest groups among Belarusian political prisoners (in 2025, more than 300 young people were recognized as political prisoners according to human rights defenders), and since 2020, more than 1,700 criminal cases have been initiated against youth on political grounds;
- C. The regime uses the education system as a tool for political control, censorship, and indoctrination, including through mandatory ideological classes, reduced access to Belarusian-language education, and replacing independent student organizations with pro-government bodies;
- D. Belarusian youth in exile face legal, economic, and social exclusion, including limited access to universities, problems with diploma recognition, barriers to employment, and difficulties obtaining residence permits;
- E. Young people continue to organize, resist, and participate in democratic movements inside the country and abroad, including through underground student networks, cultural activism, digital mobilization, and educational initiatives;

Adopt the following resolution:

1. express full solidarity with Belarusian youth resisting authoritarianism and contributing to democratic change;
2. recognize youth as political actors who must be included in decision-making processes at the national and international levels;
3. condemn the regime's practices of political indoctrination, control, and militarization of education;
4. encourage the collection and publication of verified data on repression against youth in cooperation with Belarusian civil society and international human rights bodies;
5. call on international partners to introduce targeted sanctions against individuals and institutions responsible for indoctrination and repression of youth;

6. call on the EU, the UN, and democratic governments to develop dedicated support programs for Belarusian youth in exile, including mobility programs and psychosocial assistance;
7. call for adaptive systems for the recognition of diplomas and academic documents for Belarusian students, especially those whose education was interrupted due to repression;
8. call on the EU and national education authorities to expand scholarships for Belarusian students, especially for those affected by repression or in exile;
9. call for the simplification of legal and bureaucratic procedures for academic mobility, including the development and implementation of flexible visa and migration procedures for youth;
10. support the expansion of youth mobility opportunities through Erasmus+, Creative Europe, and other EU initiatives, taking into account the status of stateless persons or unrecognized refugees from Belarus;
11. emphasize the need to create youth democratic spaces¹ and increase the representation of Belarusian youth in the bodies of the democratic forces;
12. support the systematic participation of Belarusian youth in the EU Youth Dialogue, Erasmus+ programs, and transnational civic initiatives;
13. recommend long-term investments in leadership development among youth and the creation of educational opportunities, especially those organized by youth themselves;
14. call for recognizing Belarusian youth as a force for political change and involving them in the development, evaluation, and prioritization of programs;

Instruct the relevant bodies and working groups of the democratic forces of Belarus to:

- integrate the youth perspective into their strategies, decisions, and communications;
- cooperate with youth organizations and informal initiatives in Belarus and abroad;
- monitor the implementation of this resolution.

Adopted in Warsaw, August 2025

¹ Safe, inclusive, and accessible physical or digital environments that enable young people to meet, organize, participate, learn, and act as political and civic actors. They play an important role in developing democratic participation and social cohesion and must be protected and supported by state institutions. (See Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)6 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on protecting youth civil society and young people, points 2.1 and 3.3)