



ASSOCIATION EUROPÉENNE DES AVOCATS  
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF LAWYERS

## HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

Brussels, October 31, 2017

**His Excellency  
Mr Oleg Slizhevsky  
Minister of Justice  
Republic of Belarus**

Your Excellency,

European Association of Lawyers is seriously concerned at the current situation of lawyers in Belarus which has impact on the independence of the profession of advocates and threatens the rule of law as a result of the interference of the executive in ability of the lawyers to carry out professional activities. It also has the enormous impact on the important rules which are fundamental in the democratic countries.

We would like to express our grave concern for the situation of lawyers in Belarus, recognizing that there has been an erosion of the independence of the advocates because of the extraordinary intervention of the government in the admission of advocates and unjustified interference in the free performance of professional duties by lawyers.

We call you to refrain from harassment and repression of lawyers and to reconsider the attitude to this professional group which plays a very vital role in the society.

We would like also to remind that when adopting the Declaration on Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, the United Nations Organization stressed that "Governments shall ensure that lawyers:  
(a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference;

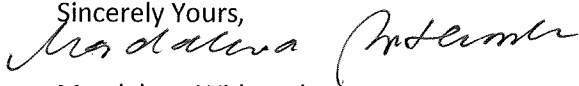
(b) are able to travel and to consult with their clients freely both within their own country and abroad; and

(c) shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics."

We call you upon the observance of these rules.

We express our solidarity with Belarusian colleagues who share our beliefs in the importance of democracy and the respect for the human rights.

Sincerely Yours,



Magdalena Witkowska

Chair

Human Rights Committee