



DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH BELARUS

- The Chairman -

Strasbourg, 26 October 2006

STATEMENT

**by Mr Bodgan KLICH,
Chairman of the Delegation for relations with Belarus**

Congratulating Mr Aleksandr Milinkevich on winning the 2006 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought

On behalf of the European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with Belarus, I would like to wholeheartedly congratulate Mr Aleksandr Milinkevich, leader of Belarus' united democratic opposition forces, on winning the 2006 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought.

The Delegation for relations with Belarus endorsed the nomination of Mr Milinkevich back in August for his courage to personally challenge the last remaining dictator in Europe and for successfully uniting the democratic opposition and expressing the desire of a large part of Belarus society to restore democratic rights and political freedoms in their country.

This decision of the European Parliament, which is a directly elected representative of EU's 457 million citizens, expresses deep sympathy and solidarity of the EU citizens with the people of Belarus and sends a strong signal that the European Union remains fully committed to the prospect of freedom and democracy in Belarus and that it does not tolerate breaches of human rights and democratic values on European soil.

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