

## Arrests of Union Officials by Lukashenko Regime

**Brussels, 22 March 2006 (ICFTU OnLine):** The ICFTU and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) have today made representations to the European Union, following the arrest of eight trade union officials in recent days by the regime of Alexander Lukashenko. The trade unionists were arrested in the lead-up to Sunday's rigged elections in which Lukashenko claimed over 82% of the vote. The ICFTU understands that the fines and detentions were imposed on those arrested by judicial authorities following explicit instructions from the regime. The elections have been widely condemned, including by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe as neither free nor fair.

In a letter to European External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Guy Ryder and John Monks, General Secretaries of the ICFTU and the ETUC respectively, called on the European Union to put pressure on the Belarus authorities over these latest authoritarian acts.

"This regime as a long history of anti-union repression and the events of the last few days only serve to show that without genuine democracy, fundamental trade union freedoms cannot be properly exercised", said Ryder, adding "we demand that President Lukashenko put an end to the systematic attacks on trade unionists and others involved in legitimate and peaceful protest action".

Those who were detained include Valentin Lazarenkov, Igor Maslovsky, Peter Tollor and Anna Kanyus of the Belarusian Free Trade Union (SPB), Sergey Lipnitsky of the Belarus Independent Trade union (BITU), Ivan Roman and Victor Kozlov, of the Radio and Electronic Workers' Union (REP), and Vasily Levchenkov of the Free Trade Union of Metal Workers.

The ICFTU represents 155 million workers in 236 affiliated organisations in 154 countries and territories. [www.icftu.org](http://www.icftu.org)

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