

## Statement from the BASTUN network on the two year anniversary of the arrest and detention on Belarus Trade Union Leaders

The BASTUN – Baltic Sea Trade Union Network – stand fully behind the free trade unions of Belarus.

Two years ago today the Belarusian regime began a crackdown on trade unions by arresting the leadership of the Belarusian Congress of Trade Unions (BKDP) including the President of BKDP Aliaksandr Yarashuk, BKDP Vice-President Siarhei Antusevich, President of Free Trade Union of Metal Workers (SPM) Aliaksandr Bukhvostau, President of Free Trade Union of Belarus (SPB) Mikalaj Sharakh among others. Although some of our colleagues have been released, countless trade unionists remain in prison and trade union activity is labelled as extremist. This is unacceptable.

The trade union colleagues in Belarus have shown great courage for many years and fought for fundamental trade union rights and human rights. Their colleagues continue to fight for them and for trade union and human rights in exile. Despite political pressure on the Belarusian government such as the through the ILO via article 33 the situation is just getting worse.

We also once again call on the member states of the CBSS, their governments and parliaments, as well as all relevant European and International organisations and institutions, and intergovernmental organisations to take measures and to intervene to secure the Belarussian trade union officials' safety and immediate release. We also demand to see action from our states on implementation of ILO article 33. There needs to be pressure on ILO to follow up the resolution on Belarus. The trade unions of BASTUN urge all of our trade union colleagues globally review relations with the Federation of trade unions of Belarus, FPB.

"We of the BASTUN network want to reaffirm our support for the trade unions and the people of Belarus and to urge our own government and the international community to keep pressure up on the Belarusian government to end its witch-hunt of trade unionists and restore freedom of association in the country!"

