Statement of the Belarusian Green Party and Ecohome non-governmental organization concerning political repressions in Belarus

We, the Belarusian Green Party and Ecohome non-governmental organization, express our joint protest against political repressions taking place in Belarus over the last few weeks. Starting from February 17th around 200 participants of peaceful demonstrations have been severely convicted, fined and imprisoned, including 25 journalists representing independent Belarusian media.

Our colleagues, eco activists Ms. Marina Dubina, Ms. Ksenia Maliukova and Ms. Alena Dubovik, have been also subjected to political repressions. They were detained with the unjustified severity and repeating abuse of the legal process. They have been sentenced to 12 and 15 days in detention due to fabricated accusations of ‘hooliganism’.

In the afternoon on the March 15th just before the launch of the peaceful March of Non-Parasites, previously approved by Minsk authorities, Ms. Marina Dubina, NGO Ecohome executive director, and Ms. Ksenia Maliukova, NGO Ecohome member, have been attacked on the bus stop by a group of men in civilian clothes without any identification marks, later on to be identified as Riot Police (OMON) personnel. The men applied brutal physical force towards young women, packed them into a minibus and delivered to the District Department of Internal Affairs of Pervomaisky district without any introduction of themselves and establishment of probable causes of the arrest.

Ms. Alena Dubovik, NGO Ecohome member, has been arrested in a public transport after the demonstration, when she was on her way home. A number of other citizens have been detained together with her by the men in civilian clothes, later on identified as law enforcement officers. Alena together with other citizens were brutally pulled out of the trolleybus and savagely beaten.

The law enforcement officers refused to provide us information about the place of the detention and on the state of health of our colleagues during several hours.
During legal processes the Riot Police staff gave false evidence about the venue, time and causes of the arrests of the activists, rejected that they were in civilian clothes during duty performance and that they applied brutal physical force towards the detainees. Nevertheless, the false evidence given by the Riot police personnel served eventually as a ground for the court judgments. The judges would refuse to consider the arguments of the defense, ignoring as well the video recordings made by the witnesses of the detentions.

It is worth noting that the afore mentioned repressions took place all over Belarus, including Minsk, right at the time of the OSCE PA President, Ms. Christine Muttonen, visit to Belarusian capital, where on March 15th she signed an agreement on the organization of the 26th OSCE PA Annual Session in Minsk. On the March 17th the Head of the IMF mission in Belarus visited Minsk and discussed with Alexander Lukashenko the possible modes of cooperation. These steps occur in the context of reanimation of political dialogue of the U.S and the EU with Belarus after Belarusian Government released political prisoners a year ago, and economic sanctions against Belarus have been lifted in return.

The decision to organize the Meeting of Parties to Espoo Convention in Minsk was another concession to Belarus on the part of European countries, despite the fact that Belarus has violated both the Espoo UNECE Convention and Aarhus Convention by starting the construction of its nuclear power plant. It was concluded during the meetings of the Parties of both the Conventions in summer 2014. Belarus has not yet complied with the requirements presented to its Government in the end of the Meeting of Parties to Espoo Convention, but hopes to win some concessions from the Parties regarding the construction of the nuclear power plant by hosting its highest governing body in Minsk.

We call on international organizations: OSCE PA, the Bureau of the Espoo Convention UNECE to make unconditional end of repressions and rehabilitation of all politically repressed as one of the key conditions of the forthcoming meetings.

We are sure, that any kind of dialogue with official Minsk loses its value and significance in the situation, when repressions of citizens and mass media, violation of basic rights and freedoms still take place.