
Belarus: Rousopoulos (Council of Europe), “farcical” elections, they lack any democratic legitimacy

“These “elections” are a travesty of democracy and lack any democratic legitimacy”: this is how the president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), Theodoros Rousopoulos, reacted in the aftermath of the parliamentary and local elections held in Belarus on 25th February. The turnout exceeded 73%. The district winners had already been announced, among nominees that stood with four parties officially admitted to the polls, all supporters of President Lukashenko. That’s why earlier today Rousopoulos, like other European and international leaders, wrote in a statement that “there cannot be free and fair elections in a situation where freedoms of speech, assembly and association are curtailed; where opposition political parties are liquidated and their leaders persecuted; where the freedom of the media is not respected; and where there is no redress against these violations and no credible domestic or international election observation is allowed”. In his statement, the President of the European institution also called for “the immediate and unconditional release and rehabilitation of all political prisoners, and for the cessation of repression”, while ensuring that PACE “will continue its efforts to support Belarusian democratic forces and to stand by the people of Belarus for a democratic, independent, sovereign, prosperous and peaceful future”.

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