

EPDE STATEMENT

MEET THE PROPS: HOW LUKASHENKA'S FAKE OBSERVERS TRIED TO SELL HIS SHAM ELECTION

The European Platform for Democratic Elections (EPDE) has exposed how over 90 politically biased “observers” were deployed to whitewash the fraudulent 2025 Belarusian Presidential Election. The Lukashenka regime, notorious for systematic human rights abuses and repression of civil society, manufactured international legitimacy by inviting hand-picked “observers”—many with direct ties to authoritarian regimes, Kremlin-linked disinformation networks, or criminal investigations in their home countries.

“Election monitoring is a fundamental pillar of democracy, but Lukashenka’s Belarus has turned it into a farce. This so-called observation mission was a staged performance, orchestrated to rubber-stamp a fraudulent election.” – Łukasz Kondraciuk, EPDE.

“We are not talking about independent election monitors. We are talking about individuals who, knowingly, were instrumentalized by an authoritarian state to mislead the world about a rigged election.” – Łukasz Kondraciuk, EPDE.

The election violated Belarus’ commitments to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), as authorities failed to invite credible international observation organizations such as ODIHR or OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in time to prepare and conduct meaningful oversight. Meanwhile, domestic election observation has been eradicated: organizations have been branded as “extremists” and shut down, while their leaders are imprisoned or forced into exile.

With genuine opposition crushed, around half a million Belarusians in exile, and over 1200 political prisoners, including the leaders of the election watchdog Human Rights Center Viasna Valiantsin Stefanovich, Uladzimir Labkovich, and the Nobel Peace Prize laureate Ales Bialiatski, behind bars, this election was never meant to offer choice. Instead, it was a propaganda exercise in which pre-selected “observers” were paraded across polling stations to declare everything “transparent and democratic.” According to the officially announced results, Lukashenka claimed victory with 86.82% of the “vote,” a preordained outcome designed to reinforce his grip on power.

A GLOBAL NETWORK OF FAKE ELECTION LEGITIMIZERS

The Belarusian Central Election Commission accredited 486 international “observers,” carefully selected to disguise the blatant violations of democratic standards. Among them were former EU politicians expelled for corruption or pro-Kremlin ties, far-right extremists, convicted criminals, and even fugitives wanted in their home countries. Some have a history of whitewashing other fraudulent elections in Russia, Azerbaijan, and occupied territories of Ukraine.

“Lukashenka’s fake election required fake observers. It’s a well-known playbook: if legitimate international organizations refuse to endorse your sham, you invite individuals who will. And we will name every single one of them we can find.” – Łukasz Kondraciuk, EPDE

“**“Belarus is demonstrating growth, and the developments here appear more democratic and focused on the country’s progress compared to what is happening today in Poland and Europe.”** ([Quote](#))

“I have participated in and prepared elections numerous times, including EU-wide ones. I would like to highlight the high level of security in the election process.” ([Quote](#))

claimed Polish politician **Krzysztof Tołwiński (pro-Kremlin party “Front”)**, local government official, and former Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of State Treasury. Tołwiński has been a member of the political parties PSL and PiS and was a member of the Polish Sejm (2010-2011). Following the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, he was [accused](#) of advancing Kremlin Propaganda in Belarus.

“**“Visiting polling stations in Minsk and the regions, I saw that people were calmly and peacefully coming to cast their vote. Music is playing everywhere, and the retail trade is well organised. Actually, a holiday has been created for people, and they attend polling stations with pleasure. I really appreciate this.”** ([Quote](#))

Tomasz Szmydt, a former judge of the Regional Administrative Court in Warsaw, said. In May 2024, Szmydt [defected](#) to Belarus, where he applied for political asylum. This forestalled [investigations](#) of espionage in favor of Belarus and the Russian Federation. Although Szmydt would have preferred to defect to Russia, he chose Belarus instead, leveraging the short-visit visa waiver for Polish citizens to avoid raising suspicions from the Polish Foreign Intelligence Agency.

“**“Everything is very democratic. The elections are conducted in a festive atmosphere, unlike anything I have ever seen. In Lithuania, you simply come and drop your ballot into the ballot box.”** ([Quote](#))

stated **Edikas Jagelavičius** from Lithuania, residing in Belarus. Jagelavičius is the former leader of the Socialist People’s Front party and a member of the “International Good Neighborhood Forum” organization, which was liquidated in 2023. Lithuanian authorities want him on suspicion of acting against Lithuania. He is an associate of Algirdas Paleckis, who was [convicted](#) of espionage for Russia.

“**“Belarus’ election was absolutely democratic. Five candidates ran for election. Each has their own position and agenda. Everything was completely transparent. People in Belarus can decide on their own what they want for their country. Belarusians want to preserve the sense of confidence and reliability that the state gives them.”** ([Quote](#))

said Swiss politician **Wilhelm Wyss**. Wyss is the president of the “Youth Action Committee for Marriage and Family” and Secretary General of the Russian-Swiss Friendship Society. A known supporter of Russian President Vladimir Putin, he [displayed](#) the letter Z in support of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which led to his dismissal from the Swiss People’s Party (SVP).

“**“Based on the responses we later received at the polling stations we visited, we were able to confirm that there were no problems with voting, no coercion, and everything proceeded calmly.”** ([Quote](#))

“I would like to point out that the voter turnout during early voting here is practically the same as the final results we have in Italy after parliamentary elections. In Italy, as in most Mediterranean countries, many people do not participate in elections at all. In Belarus, the opposite is evident—Belarusians were eager to vote in the presidential elections.” ([Quote](#))

praised Italian politician **Vito Petrocelli** and former member of the M5S party. Petrocelli declared himself a supporter of [China](#) and [Russia](#) to the extent that he was nicknamed “Petrov.” After openly supporting the Russian invasion of Ukraine, he was expelled from M5S and [lost his position](#) as the president of the Foreign Affairs Committee. He is the president of the [BRICS Italy Institute](#).

“**“European democracy is no longer about freedom of choice; it is a system of imposed values. The fact that I am here shows that the French people support Belarus and your people. We are against any external attacks.”** ([Quote](#))

said French politician **Hervé Juvin**. A former member of the European Parliament from far-right Rassemblement National (RN). In 2022, he was [convicted](#) of domestic violence and dismissed.

“**“Everything is taking place in a very cheerful, pleasant, festive atmosphere. In my country, everything is organized in a less engaging way and without music.”** ([Quote](#))

said **Frank Creyelman**, Former senator in Belgium from the far-right party Vlaams Belang. He was [expelled](#) from the party over scandalous accusations of being a Chinese intelligence asset and attempted to influence Belgian foreign policy in favor of China. The Federal Public Prosecutor’s Office [opened](#) a formal investigation into Creyelman for Chinese espionage, while his younger brother Steven, a sitting Vlaams Belang MP, was also being investigated in Parliament.

“ ***"I notice, as I have this time as well, that elections are truly a celebration for voters. (...) There are no violations; the entire process is well-organized and clear to the voters."*** ([Quote](#))

claimed **Heinz Wehmeier**, a local politician in Saxony-Anhalt (SPD party) from Germany, chairman of the German-Russian Society of Wittenberg. According to [t-online](#), Wehmeier received the Federal Cross of Merit in 2017 for his "social commitment to German-Russian and German-Belarusian cultural and civil exchange.

“ ***"They say there is a dictatorship here, but I think that is untrue. The reality here in Belarus is completely different. People are calm and communicate well; it's not like that in Europe at all."*** ([Quote](#))

"My first impression was that everything is very well organized and highly professional. The atmosphere is calm, and people see the elections as a celebration. The most important thing is the coming years, during which the nation will continue to develop and follow its own path." ([Quote](#))

said **Krastyo Vrachev**, a Member of the Parliament of Bulgaria from the pro-Russian political party Revival (Възраждане).

“ ***"We visited a large number of polling stations, and at each one, we were shown the entire voting process. I was pleasantly surprised to see that those voting for the first time (who have just turned 18) are given gifts—a book about the country's symbols and a sweatshirt with the inscription 'This is my first vote.' In my country, there is no such openness; our state definitely has something to learn from the Republic of Belarus."*** ([Quote](#))

claimed **Bosse „Bo“ Jonsson**. Jonsson founded the pro-Russian political party United Sweden (Enade Sverige), which was established in 2019.

“ ***"Of course, some European politicians and parties have labeled the elections as undemocratic and illegitimate, but in reality, this does not correspond to the truth. I can see that this is not a staged performance or a show for observers and external experts, but a genuine opportunity for the Belarusian people to determine the future of their country."*** ([Quote](#))

Austrian politician **Dietrich Kops** from the far-right party Team HC Strache was a member of the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) until December 2019. Before that, he was a member of the Vienna State Parliament and the Vienna City Council from 2010.

“ ***"We had the opportunity to observe the vote counting, the election results being revealed, and this process was characterized by complete transparency. I do not have much time to go into more detail about this. However, I can note that we do view the electoral process in Belarus as credible. I want to congratulate both the people of Belarus and the Central Electoral Commission, which has done a tremendous job."*** ([Quote](#))

stated **Mosotho Moepya**, Chairperson of the Electoral Commission of South Africa, following his appointment in October 2022.

“***"I noticed a very calm and friendly atmosphere there, and journalists faced no barriers in their work. I also noticed that your voting boxes are transparent, and this once again confirms the openness and transparency of the process. We talked a lot with people. It is obvious that the Belarusian people want peace and stability. People see that there is a war going on nearby and also in different parts of the world. Your people do not want such conflicts at home, they want to live in peace. Besides, Belarus is developing. The Government works hard to develop the economy, and I see that everything is fine in Belarus."*** ([Quote](#))

reported **Ali Cura**, Head of the Moscow Office of Anadolu Agency.

“***"The professionalism with which the election campaign was prepared, the transparency, the provision of security and the comfort created for voters of different ages and different abilities (referring to the possibilities of a barrier-free environment. - BelTA note) are amazing."*** ([Quote](#))

claims **Steve Samarin** from the US. [Sputnik](#) presented him as a political scientist. He also [appears](#) as a commentator on Belarusian state-affiliated media, voicing support for Lukashenka. However, an [investigation](#) by euroradio.fm revealed that his real name is Vladislav Spektorov, and he is not a political analyst but a trained field radio operator. Before migrating to the United States and obtaining a theological education, Spektorov lived in Samara, Russia (a detail that aligns with the meaning of his last name, "from Samara"). In the U.S., he registered two religious NGOs: Global Christian Ministry and the Institute of International Collaboration and Partnership. In 2015, when he congratulated Lukashenka on his re-election, it was [exposed](#) that he was affiliated with the Minsk-based International University MITSO rather than being a professor at the University of Florida, as he had claimed. According to the same investigation, Spektorov also has a criminal record.

“***"I have read and heard a lot about the 2020 presidential elections in Belarus. Even back then, the West, Western parties, and the European Commission constantly claimed that the elections were unfair and that they did not recognize President Lukashenko. This year, the European Commission was already preparing in advance to declare that these elections were fraudulent, that the choice of the Belarusian people was wrong, and to refuse to recognize the winner if it turned out to be Alexander Lukashenko. But this has nothing to do with democracy—nothing at all."*** ([Quote](#))

said **Detlef Bauer**, German politician from far-right AfD party and former member of the Bottrop district council. Two years ago he gave an [interview](#) to Belarus state propaganda channel ONT, founded by Lukashenko.

LIST OF IDENTIFIED FAKE OBSERVERS AT THE 2025 “PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION” IN BELARUS

Country	Name	Affiliation
Austria	Dietrich Kops	Local politician, far-right party "Team HC Strache"
Austria	Klaus Händler	Local politician, far-right party "Team HC Strache"
Belgium	Serge Mikertchan	Former municipal council candidate from far-right party Vlaams Belang
Belgium	Frank Creyelmans	Former Senator from far-right party Vlaams Belang
Bulgaria	Krastyo Vrachev	Member of the Bulgarian parliament from pro-Russian party Revival (Възраждане)
Brazil	Lucas Leiros	Journalist, Chairman BRICS Journalists Association
Colombia	David Alejandro Toro Ramírez	Member of the Chamber of Representatives of Colombia
France	Hervé Juvin	Former member of the European Parliament (MEP), far-right Rassemblement National (RN)
Georgia	Mamuka Pipia	International Affairs Secretary of the pro-Kremlin Solidarity for Peace party
Georgia	Temur Pipia	Secretary General of the pro-Kremlin Solidarity for Peace party
Germany	Detlef Bauer	Former member of the Bottrop district council, far-right AfD party
Germany	Heinz Wehmeier	Local politician, centre-left SPD party, Chairman of the German-Russian Society of Wittenberg
Hungary	Gyula Thürmer	Chairman of the Hungarian Workers' Party (Magyar Munkáspárt)
Iran	Mohsen Eslami	Director General of the Election Office of Iran
Italy	Matteo Peggio	President of the Committee of Solidarity with Belarus
Italy	Andrea Lucidi	Reporter, ByoBly TV

Italy	Vito Petrocelli	Former member of the Italian Senate, President Italian BRICS Institute
Kenya	Ledama Olekina	Member of the Senate of Kenya
Kazakhstan	Nurlan Äbdiröv	Chairman of the Central Election Commission of Kazakhstan
Kyrgyz Republic	Nurzhan Shaildabekova	Chairperson of the Central Election Commission of Kyrgyzstan
Latvia	Yuriy Alekseyev	N/a
Lithuania	Edikas Jagelavičius	Former member of the organization "International Good Neighborhood Forum", which was liquidated in 2023, former leader of the Socialist People's Front party
Moldova	Constantin Starysh	Member of Parliament (Communist Party)
Myanmar	Aung Soe Win	Member of the Union Election Commission (UEC)
Pakistan	Durrani Nisar Ahmed	Member of the Central Election Commission
Poland	Wacław Kłokowski	N/a
Poland	Krzysztof Tołwiński	Local government official and former Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of State Treasury, Chairman of the pro-Kremlin party "Front"
Poland	Tomasz Szmydt	Former judge of the Regional Administrative Court in Warsaw
Russian Federation	Ella Pamfilova	Chairperson of the Central Election Commission of Russia
Serbia	Dragan Stanojević	Member of the National Assembly, pro-russian party We-The Voice from the People (MI-GIN)
Serbia	Marko Milojevic	Far-right movement "Nashi"
Serbia	Ivan Ivanovic	Far-right movement "Nashi"
Serbia	Miroslav Mladenovic	Professor at the University of Belgrade

Serbia	Dušan Proroković	Former member of the National Assembly, political advisor for far-right Serbian Party Oathkeepers, Professor at the Faculty of Diplomacy and Security
Slovakia	Miroslav Radačovský	Former member of the European Parliament, far-right party Slovak PATRIOT
Slovakia	Adam Lučanský	Member of National Council, far-right Slovak National Party
Slovakia	Peter Marček	Former member of the National Council, far-right party Republic Movement (Hnutie Republika)
South Africa	Mosotho Moepya	Chairperson of the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC)
Spain	Jose Eduardo	N/a
Spain	Ángeles Maestro	Former member of the Congress of Deputies of Spain
Sweden	Bo Jonsson	Founder of a political party United Sweden (Enade Sverige) that was established in 2019.
Switzerland	Eric Weber	Member of of the Grand Council of Basel-Stadt, far-right party "Volks-Aktion gegen zu viele Ausländer und Asylanten in unserer Heimat (VA)"
Switzerland	Wilhelm Wyss	President of the public organization "Youth for Marriage and Family", Secretary General of the Russian-Swiss Friendship
Switzerland	Patrik Kretz	Member of the Regional Parliament of Zug, Member of the public organization "Youth for Marriage and Family", Swiss People's Party (SVP)
Turkey	Ali Cura	Chief Correspondent and Deputy Director for Asia and Caucasus News at Anadolu Agency's Moscow Bureau
Turkey	Ekrem Özübek	Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Electoral Council of the Republic of Turkey
USA	Steve Samarin, real name is: Vladislav Spektorov	Independent observer, presented in the Belarusian media as a political scientist
Uzbekistan	Zayniddin Nizamkhodjaev	Chairman of the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan
Zimbabwe	Priscilla Chigumba	Chairperson of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, High Court Judge at Judicial Service Commission

CALL TO ACTION

1. Restrict EU travel privileges for fake observers: If an individual endorses a sham election in Belarus as “democratic,” they should not be able to enjoy the freedoms of actual democracies. The EU should impose visa restrictions and entry bans on non-EU nationals participating in fake election observation. If these individuals claim Belarusian elections meet democratic standards, they should not be granted access to the benefits of European democracy.

2. Scrutinize institutions represented by fake observers:

- If EU-based: Authorities should examine potential legal consequences for individuals and institutions helping legitimize an authoritarian regime. This includes evaluating whether participation in these missions constitutes a violation of political financing laws, electoral integrity standards, or lobbying regulations.
- If non-EU-based: The EU and democratic states should sever all institutional ties with universities, think tanks, or professional associations linked to these individuals. There should be zero cooperation or funding for any organization complicit in election whitewashing.

3. Expose and shame fake observers in the media: We encourage journalists to report on the individuals who took part in fake observation missions, for their actions to carry reputational costs. Fake observers are not neutral actors, they are the enablers of electoral fraud, the allies of dictators, and the enemies of democratic governance. Media outlets, civil society groups, and investigative journalists should track, expose, and question these individuals whenever they resurface in public or political life.

4. Cut all remaining institutional cooperation with Belarusian authorities: All democratic institutions, electoral bodies, and governments should immediately review any lingering cooperation with Belarusian authorities, especially the Central Election Commission. No joint projects, exchanges, or observer invitations should involve Belarusian electoral authorities as long as they continue to manufacture sham elections. The EU and international organizations should make it clear that Belarus’ CEC is not a legitimate electoral body, but a political instrument of Lukashenka’s dictatorship.

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