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Issue: Double standards of EU/EC in regards of dictatorial countries like Belarus on the issue of cultural programme funding

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Summary of discussion, conclusions and/or recommendations:

EU/EC has announced the Cultural Programme Funding within Eastern Partnership for such countries like Belarus. Belarus is under dictatorship for the last 16 years. The culture is divided into two streams: official pop culture that promotes the dictator and gets financial support from him and counterculture that exists underground in Belarus. It is not possible to get official registration from the Belarusian authorities for such cultural initiatives that work in underground conditions and raise contemporary issues by means of arts.

The Belarus Free Theatre (BFT) partners from the UK and Germany applied for EU funding in the frames of Eastern Partnership but all partners received answers that the BFT needs to provide an official paper/registration from the Belarusian Government. All articles, reportages, documentaries that are done on activities of the BFT by the world media are taken into consideration by EC. The EC says that it is necessary to base the application of rules but not the activities. It is not possible for the BFT and many other countercultural initiatives in Belarus to provide the official registration because all those initiatives are prohibited by the Belarusian Government.

Recommendation:

1. To get registration from another region that is eligible for funding with EC.

Conclusions:

1. It is important to hear about such the situation and the country in general.
2. Culture is just a part of the whole society that reflects the whole geopolitical situation.
3. The situation at cultural level could be changed only if the whole political situation is changed for democracy.