

Alexander Koniuk
Prosecutor General of the Republic of Belarus
Internatsionalnaya Str., 22
220030 Minsk
Belarus

Dear Sir,

Emil Ostrovko was only 17 years old when in April 2018 he received a 10-year prison sentence for drug trafficking, later reduced to eight years. Emil had worked after school as a courier for an online company. His employer told him that the parcels he was delivering contained legal smoking mixtures – it was a lie; he was delivering illegal drugs. Investigators never looked for the owner of the company, or anyone else. Only Emil was prosecuted.

In Belarus, people serving lengthy prison sentences for petty drugs offences are treated far worse than other offenders and made to do long hours of hard labor. Emil was denied immediate access to vital medication and got frostbite after being forced to clear snow with his bare hands. While life has got a little better for Emil since he was moved to an adult prison in June, his youth and potential are being wasted because of highly punitive drug laws.

I urge you to immediately release Emil, clear his criminal record and ensure no children are imprisoned for minor, non-violent drug offences.

Yours sincerely,