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EU/Russia relations after the murder of Anna Politkovskaya

Greens/EFA motion for a resolution

Tabled by Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Hélène Flautre and Bart Staes on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

The European Parliament,

 having regard to the objectives of consolidating democracy and political freedoms in the Russian Federation, as laid down in the EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), which entered into force on 1 December 1997,

 having regard to its previous resolutions and declarations concerning press freedom and freedom of speech in Russia, particularly its resolutions of 12 May 2005 and 19 January 2006,

 having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. deeply shocked at the killing of Anna Politkovskaya, who was shot dead near her apartment on 7 October,

B. whereas this murder follows that of Andrei Kozlov, the deputy chairman of the Russian Central Bank, who was trying to reform Russia's banking system; whereas contract-style killings of political opponents and personalities critical of the Russian regime constitute an alarming phenomenon in Russia,

C. whereas Russia has become one of the deadliest countries for journalists, as 23 journalists were killed in that country between 1996 and 2005, at least 12 of whom were murdered, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists,

D. whereas the investigations of these murders have been inadequate and in most cases the murderers have never been identified,

E. whereas in recent years democracy has been further substantially deteriorating in Russia, in particular due to the growth of government control over major TV and radio stations, the spread of self-censorship among the print media, the closure of independent media, restrictions on the right to organise public demonstrations and a worsening climate for NGOs, with cases of harassment of human rights activists and increased political control of the judiciary,

F. whereas so far the EU-Russia human rights dialogue has brought about no substantial progress in this field, which should be a priority in EU-Russia relations,

1. Pays tribute to the work and merits of Anna Politkovskaya, a highly respected journalist, known as the

symbol of honest journalism in Russia, who courageously stood up in defence of human life and dignity and who exposed and objectively reported on different forms of crimes against humanity, particularly forced disappearances and torture in Chechnya;

2. Expresses its sincere condolences to the family of Anna Politkovskaya;

3. Condemns the murder of Anna Politkovskaya in the strongest terms, and calls on the Russian authorities to permit an international, independent, impartial and efficient inquiry to identify and punish those responsible for this cowardly crime; expresses its concern at the appointment, as head of the current investigation, of former Justice Minister Chaika, who neglected human rights violations in Chechnya when he was in office;

4. Voices its deep concern about the systematic intimidation, harassment and murder of independent journalists as well as other persons critical of the government and recalls that the resulting climate of impunity in which killers seem not to fear the law is seriously damaging to Russia's reputation as a Council of Europe presidency state,

5. Calls upon the Presidency of the Council to raise this issue at the forthcoming Lahti summit;

6. Calls upon the Council and the Commission to make every effort to support the development and consolidation of a strong, lively and genuine civil society and independent media as fundamental and indispensable elements of a functioning democracy in Russia;

7. Calls for the EU-Russia Human Rights dialogue to be stepped up so as to make it more effective, open to NGOs and result-oriented, while fully involving the European Parliament at all levels, with a view to strengthening this element in the new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement due to be negotiated soon;

8. Urges the Council, in this context, to give serious thought to the future of relations with the Russian Federation, debating the subject with the European Parliament and civil society with a view to placing democracy, human rights and freedom of expression at the core of any future agreement and instituting a clear mechanism to monitor the implementation of all the clauses of such an agreement, including the formulation of a suspension clause;

9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the President, Government and Parliament of the Russian Federation

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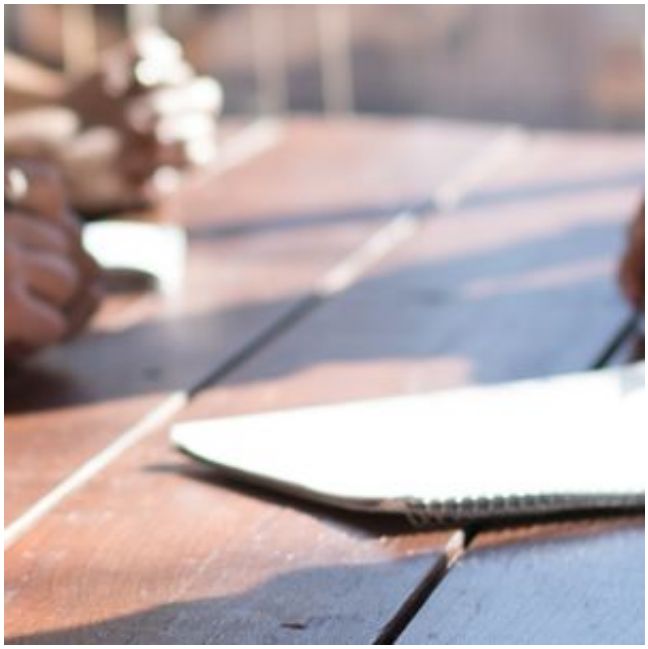
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