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News | 09.07.2015

Sakharov Prize

Greens/EFA group nominates the Saudi blogger Raif Badawi

With this nomination, the Greens want to increase pressure on the Saudi government in view of Mr. Badawi's (1) release and protect him against further flogging and abuse. The Supreme Court of Saudi Arabia has confirmed the sentence against the blogger in early June. He is due to be flogged after the end of Ramadan next week.

The nomination also highlights the EU's responsibility. The EU has still not issued sanctions against those involved in the condemnation of Mr. Badawi and his public flogging.

In February, the Greens had already called for more resolute action against Riyadh but geostrategic and trade interests still seem to outweigh human rights.

The Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought was set up in 1988 and is awarded each year by the European Parliament. It is named after Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov.

The prize is awarded for a particular achievement in one of the following fields:

- defence of human rights and fundamental freedoms, particularly the right to
- free expression;
- safeguarding the rights of minorities;
- respect for international law;
- development of democracy and implementation of the rule of law

(1) The Saudi blogger Raif Badawi was sentenced to 1000 lashes, ten years in prison, a travel ban and a hefty fine. In January, he received 50 lashes, since the punishment is suspended for medical reasons.

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