Press release | 27.10.2011

Sakharov Prize

EP awards prize to Arab Spring representatives, in support of freedom and democracy in the region

The winner of the 2011 Sakharov Prize for freedom of thought was today decided at the EP conference of presidents (1). The 2011 prize has been awarded to a group activists representative of the Arab Spring: Asmaa Mahfouz (Egypt), Ahmed al-al-Sanusi Zubair Ahmed (Libya), Razan Zaitouneh (Syria), Ali Farzat (Syria) and Mohamed Bouazizi (Tunisia). The Greens/EFA group, which supported the nomination, welcomed the decision, with co-president **Dany Cohn-Bendit** stating:

"Today's decision is a vote of support by the EP for the ongoing process towards freedom and democracy in North Africa and the Middle East. The prize winners are representative of the wider Arab Spring movements but have also made a huge contribution in the struggle for regime change and political evolution in their countries. The EU needs to learn from its past mistakes in its relations towards its southern neighbours and ensure that, in the future, it gives priority to the support of human rights, democracy and civil society, and no longer does so solely from the point of view of the governments or regimes in place."

(1) The European Parliament will award the Sakharov Prize during the December 2011 plenary session in Strasbourg.

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