

Human Rights in Russia

Greens/ EFA and EGP condemn police raid on environmental NGO's offices in Samara, Russia

The Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament and the European Green Party condemn in the strongest possible terms the raid by police on the offices of the Social-Ecological Union (SEU) in the city of Samara. SEU is oldest and largest environmental organisation in Russia and is one of the country's most respected NGOs. This raid is just the latest example of the Russian authorities' ongoing persecution of civil society organisations and activists.

In a joint statement, Green MEP **Heidi Hautala**, Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Human Rights and **Monica Frassoni** and **Philippe Lamberts**, EGP Co-Spokespersons said:

"This very worrying incident shows that in spite of recent statements by President Medvedev about his wish to see more respect for democracy and human rights in Russia, abuses are still taking place with alarming frequency. We must be clear about the fact that the incident in Samara took place against the backdrop of a sweeping rollback of freedoms of expression, association and assembly in Russia. Although the Samara City Department for Internal Affairs have claimed that the raid on SEU's offices were part of an "investigation related to a criminal case", SEU's representative in Samara, Sergey Simak, has received no official information about the reason for the raid. It can also surely be no mere coincidence that the raid occurred on 13th April, just one day after activists from Samara and 44 other cities in Russia held protests against the felling of virgin Mediterranean pistachio-juniper forests to make space for the construction of a health and sports complex. "

"We join the many concerned civil society and environmental organisations and activists both in Russia and internationally who have condemned the actions of the authorities in Samara. We call on the authorities in Samara to give a clear explanation of why the raid took place and demand that the President of Russia and his government take decisive action to protect civil society from pressure and attacks by authorities at all level. We Greens will continue to scrutinise this case and other examples of abuses of civil and democratic rights in Russia and call on the authorities to respect the rights under the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, to which Russia is a party. Furthermore, we urge the EU and its member states to put pressure on Russia so that its citizens can enjoy the freedoms and human rights that we are all entitled to. We will do this in partnership with the EGP's Member Organisation in Russia, GROZA and Green Russia, the EGP's Observer Organisation there. "

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Responsible MEPs



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