Russia

EP calls for action on democracy and human rights ahead of presidential elections

The European Parliament today adopted a resolution on the situation in Russia, ahead of next month's presidential elections. The Greens welcomed the call to do more to promote political pluralism and fair elections, as well as the condemnation of human rights abuses. After the vote, Green MEP and vice-chair of the EP Russia delegation **Werner Schulz** MEP said:

"The EP has today issued a clear call for free and fair elections ahead of next month's presidential poll in Russia. Last year's Duma elections clearly fell far short of international standards and it is crucial that Russia now immediately implements reforms to ensure the presidential elections do not fall into the same trap. The Russian public is clearly demanding this change, as the huge numbers taking part in recent democratic demonstrations attest, and these demands cannot continue to fall on deaf ears.

"The EP also condemned the violent crackdowns against the recent peaceful opposition protest. Only through meaningful democratic reform, and not violent repression, will the legitimate demands of the opposition be appeased.

"The lack of democratic legitimacy of the new Duma has also forced a rethink in how the EP engages with Russia. The Greens believe there is now a need for deeper extra-parliamentary dialogue with the disenfranchised Russian opposition and will organise a first meeting to this end in April."

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