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Russia-Georgia media freedom debate and film screening

Debate on censorship and film screening

Debate on censorship: Eutelsat's refusal to broadcast TV channel Pervyi Kavkazskiy

Film screening: 'Russian lessons', a documentary on the Georgia-Russia conflict of 2008

18.30-21.00, 17 March 2010

Room ASP 1 G 2, European Parliament, Brussels

Co-organisers: Greens/EFA and Reporters sans frontières

With: EP human rights subcommittee chair Heidi Hautala and guests

Cross-party Members of the European Parliament and Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF), concerned by the ongoing deterioration of media freedom in the Russian Federation and shocked by the collaboration of some European companies with the Kremlin's sponsored censorship, are organising a conference on 17 March regarding the case of the TV channel Pervyi Kavkazskiy. There will also be a screening of Andrei Nekrasov's documentary film, 'Russian Lessons'.

Pervyi Kavkazskiy is the first TV channel in the Russian language in the Caucasus region that is independent from the Kremlin or its proxies. Composed by young journalists coming from Caucasus, Russia and Central Asia, it was supposed to be broadcast on Eutelsat's W7 satellite. But after signing a deal with the Russian firm Intersputnik, Eutelsat, the main European satellite provider, suddenly refused to implement the contract that linked it to the small Caucasian channel.

A court case is ongoing in Paris and a political and civil society mobilisation has started in Europe, but Pervyi Kavkazskiy is still blocked out and only available on Internet. This leads to serious questions about the commitment of some European companies to respect media pluralism and European principles when it comes to deals with authoritarian regimes.

On Wed March 17th **Andrei Nekrasov** (filmmaker), **Ekaterina Kotrikadze** (editor in chief of Pervyi Kavkazskiy) and other Russian journalists will hold debate, moderated by **Heidi Hautala**, Chairwoman of European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights, at the European Parliament in Brussels.

The debate will be followed by the screening of Andrei Nekrasov's documentary film, Russian Lessons. This film is the first independent investigation from a Russian perspective on the war that opposed Georgia and Russia in August 2008. It offers a view on the conflict that is very different from the official Russian version and powerfully highlights the role of the Kremlin orchestrated propaganda in manipulating of the world's public opinion.

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