Press release | 26.03.2013

Russia

EU must withhold visa liberalisation for officials over civil society harassment

Commenting on the harassment of non-governmental and civil society organisations in Russia, Green MEP and chair of the EP's sub-committee on human rights **Barbara Lochbihler** said:

"The growing harassment and crackdowns against civil society organisations and NGOs by the Russian authorities raise real concerns about the health of Russian democracy. The EU cannot stand idly by in the face of this harassment of NGOs. One concrete response would be an immediate freeze of a planned visa liberalisation scheme between the EU and Russia for officials involved in this civil society crackdown or those suspected of complicity in the murder of Sergei Magnitsky. The Greens have written to EU Commission president Barroso and foreign policy high representative Ashton to this end."

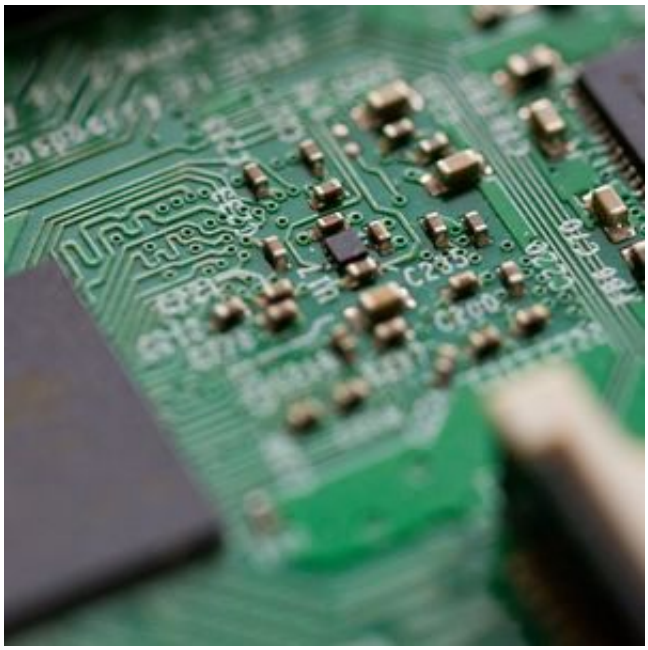
Green foreign policy spokesperson and vice-chair of the EU-Russia parliamentary cooperation committee **Werner Schulz** added:

"The persisting and disruptive searches of the offices of hundreds of independent NGOs and foundations in Russia are absolutely unacceptable. As well as undermining the work of these organisations, this action is a blow to Russian citizens who want more civic engagement. The EU must not ignore these moves to undermine basic democratic rights, which the EU should be promoting with its foreign policy."

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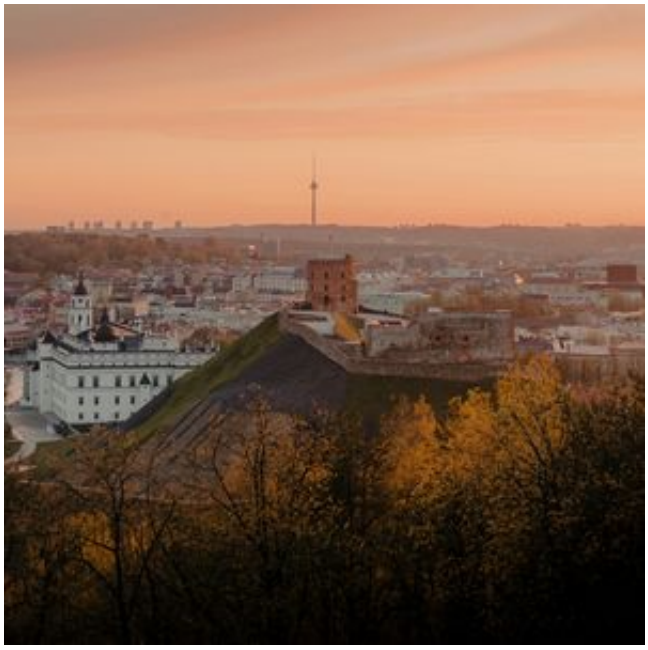
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Barbara Lochbihler

Member

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