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Sakharov Prize

Russian human rights defenders top Sakharov Prize shortlist

Today, a joint meeting of the European Parliament's foreign affairs and development committees selected a shortlist of three candidates for the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought. (1)

Greens/EFA Co-presidents **Rebecca Harms** and **Daniel Cohn-Bendit** commented:

"We are very pleased that Greens/EFA nominees Oleg Orlov, Sergei Kovalev and Lyudmila Alexeyeva have topped the shortlist for the Sakharov Prize. We submitted their nomination on behalf of MEMORIAL and all human rights defenders in Russia.

We hope to shine a spotlight on their achievements for human rights in Russia and also on the intolerably difficult and dangerous situation in which they work. Tomorrow is the third anniversary of Anna Politkovskaya's murder – a timely reminder of the terrible price that has been paid by a number of defenders of free speech and human rights in Russia in recent years."

*** **ENDS** ***

Notes to editors:

(1) The Sakharov Prize, named after Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov, has been awarded by the European Parliament annually since 1988.

Today's shortlisted candidates to be confirmed by the EP group presidents later this month are:

- Oleg Orlov, Sergei Kovalev and Lyudmila Alexeyeva (on behalf of the human rights organisation 'MEMORIAL' and all human rights defenders in Russia);
- Dr Izzeldin Abuelaish, a Palestinian doctor from Gaza;
- Dawit Isaak, an Eritrean journalist, writer and playwright.

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Rebecca Harms

Member

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