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Ukraine

Green leader Rebecca Harms launches appeal in support of Ukraine

After having returned from an extended visit with the official delegation of the European Parliament to Ukraine, the leader of the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament, **Rebecca Harms**, today launched an appeal in support of Ukraine, in which she called for a permanent observer mission of the European Parliament to Kiev. Next Wednesday, the European Parliament in Strasbourg will discuss the situation in Ukraine and vote on a resolution on Thursday.

Here is the full text of the appeal:

Ukraine needs our attention and support now!

In Ukraine, in Kiev and more and more cities in the east and in the west of the country, citizens continue to go out on to the street for democracy, rule of law and human rights. They let themselves not be intimidated by threats, arrest, kidnapping and even killing of individual citizens. The Euromaidan movement has only grown. All attempts to find a compromise between the President, the opposition and the civil rights movement have so far not progressed well. The fear that a state of emergency will be declared grows each day. Everything must be done to prevent this.

1. Do not look away until the next escalation – we have to show our presence now!

It is important to be present with representatives from the European Union in Kiev and in other areas. Visits in Kiev, talking with all colleagues in the Ukrainian parliament, with the speakers of the Euromaidan, with churches and other civil society representatives are urgent. Such visits are not only to understand better the situation, the politics and the people of Ukraine, for those living in the West of the EU. Being Present and talking with all serves the idea of dialogue and can protect the country perhaps from more violence.

The European Parliament must now launch a permanent observer mission! National MPs shall be able to take part.

2. Demand an end to human rights violations, abduction, torture and arrests

Reports of human rights violations are increasing. Kidnapping, torture and violence against speakers or activists of the civil rights movement increase every day. Journalists who are reporting on the Euromaidan or dare to report critically on the government are persecuted, threatened and beaten.

Many civil rights activists and supporters of Euromaidan are already sitting in prison or are missing. Amnesty International has protested against this.

With the withdrawal of the laws of 16th January by a large majority of the Verkhovna Rada, all political prisoners must be released unconditionally. All crimes against humanity must be examined.

3. Guarantee humanitarian assistance

The injured, sick and ill people of the Euromaidan movement do not receive reliable medical treatment. Doctors and paramedics are threatened. The injured are abducted from hospitals or arrested there. Some 'disappear'. The World Health Organisation of the United Nations cannot tolerate this. Also the International Red Cross has to support the people in Ukraine now.

The right to medical care and support for all victims of violence and disease must be respected immediately!

4. End the new unilateral financial dependence on Russia

After President Putin froze Russia's next payments to Ukraine on the basis of not know who will continue to rule in the country, the EU and U.S. should stop merely talking. It is a chance to become a credible partner again. An escalation and possible bankruptcy in the largest country of our Eastern Partnership threatens the security and stability of the continent.

The EU and IMF can make their own payments that can compensate for the failure of the Russians and avoid bankruptcy.

5. Combat money laundering and tax evasion

This requirement is not new and already exists in the European Union. In Ukraine, what damage can be done to an economy is shown once again by a lack of transparency in the financial sector, lack of procurement rules for public contracts and money laundering arising.

We demand with immediate effect the systematic imposition of these requirements in relation to Ukrainian companies and businessmen.

6. Immediate improvement of travel possibilities for the citizens of Ukraine to the EU

For 10 years, we have had a debate about a difficult and expensive visa regime. Given the situation, we see it fit to introduce immediately temporary, very simple and inexpensive visa procedures. All those who put themselves in great danger through the use of global values and rights, should not be virtually locked out of the EU.

Not only in EU embassies, but in as many places as possible in the Ukraine, in the many Polish consulates for examples, there must be available for issuing initially for the next 6 months such simple visas.

Representatives from various parliaments must try to contribute to the realisation of the will for democracy and the rule of law. The European Council, President Barroso and Catherine Ashton must pursue a unified strategy. It should be recognised that the future of Ukraine is not a plan designed by Moscow or Brussels. Ukraine's future must and will be determined by the Ukrainians. But they expect the support of the European Union.

Rebecca Harms is President of the Greens in the European Parliament and has been a member of the EU-Ukraine delegation since 2004.

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Rebecca Harms

Member

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