



Plenary sitting

B8-0249/2017

4.4.2017

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 135 of the Rules of Procedure

on Russia, the arrest of Alexei Navalny and other protestors
(2017/2646(RSP))

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on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

**European Parliament resolution on Russia, the arrest of Alexei Navalny and other protestors
(2017/2646(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
 - having regard to United Nations Human Rights Council resolution 15/21;
 - having regard to its previous recommendations and resolutions on Russia, in particular its recommendations to the Council of 23 October 2012 and of 2 April 2014 on establishing common visa restrictions for Russian officials involved in the Sergei Magnitsky case, and its resolutions of 13 June 2013 on the rule of law in Russia, of 13 March 2014 on ‘Russia: sentencing of demonstrators involved in the Bolotnaya Square events’, of 23 October 2014 on the closing-down of the NGO "Memorial" (winner of the 2009 Sakharov Prize) in Russia;
 - having regard to its previous resolution on Alexei Navalny, from 15 January 2015;
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
 - having regard to the Russian Constitution, in particular article 29 which protects the freedom of speech and article 31 which includes the right to assemble peacefully and to the international human rights obligations to which Russia has committed itself as Member of the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the UN;
 - having regard to Rule 123 of its Rules of Procedure;
 - having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure;
- A. whereas Alexey Navalny initiated a series of peaceful public protests against corruption all over Russia on Sunday 26 March which brought together thousands of Russian citizens in over 80 different public demonstrations;
- B. whereas only 21 of these demonstrations had formal permission from local authorities, despite the stipulations of freedom of expression and assembly contained in articles 29 and 31 of the Russian Constitution; whereas the Russian police detained over 2000 demonstrators throughout the country, including Alexey Navalny; many of which have since been sentenced to up to 25 days in jail or heavy fines;
- C. whereas Alexey Navalny has uncovered, as a lawyer, blogger and anti-corruption activist, numerous corruption affairs involving corporations and Russian politicians and led several public protests all over Russia; whereas he has been detained, arrested and sentenced previously, in attempts to stop his political and public activities;

- D. whereas on 2 April at least 31 people have been arrested during opposition protests in Moscow and thereafter detained for “breaches of public order”,
- E. whereas the situation of human rights and the rule of law continues to deteriorate in Russia, with systematic efforts by the authorities to silence free speech, limit the freedom of assembly, obstruct opposition activities, react with repressions to any activities aimed at exposing corruption and stifle the activities of Russian civil society; whereas the Russian judicial system has become a power instrument to this end, providing politically motivated arrest, trials and imprisonments and covering-up the impunity of others;
- F. whereas these facts take place in the Russian Federation in a context of repression, which has again been reinforced with the introduction of new pieces of legislation providing police and security forces with new means to suppress and repress social dissent,
- G. whereas respect for the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law are key commitments related to Russia's membership of the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the UN, and are crucial pillars of a thriving, prosperous and pluralistic society; whereas corruption heavily burdens economic development and impoverishes the Russian population; whereas the European Parliament, on numerous occasions, has expressed its concern over the state of democracy in Russia, the systematic failure to uphold democracy the rule of law and respect for fundamental rights and principles;
1. Extends its sincere condolences to the victims, families and friends of the bomb explosion in the Saint Petersburg metro;
 2. Expresses serious concern with the significant and continuous deterioration of the respect for human rights, rule of law and freedom of expression in Russia, as well as the persecution of civic society and its representative organisations by state authorities; underlines that this is against the Russian Constitution, legal order and international obligations;
 3. Notes the high turn-out in the widespread anti-corruption protests throughout the Russian Federation on Sunday 26 March, in particular the strong mobilisation of young people rallying against corruption and the increasingly authoritarian rule inside Russia; welcomes this engagement as a hopeful sign of increased interest in public and political matters; strongly objects to the arrest and detention of many of the protesters, and to the sentences they have received, including the 15-day prison sentence for Alexey Navalny;
 4. Calls on the Russian authorities to immediately release the protesters that remain in detention and to revoke the sentences, including the fines imposed on some of the protesters; underlines that Russian authorities and judicial personnel bear full responsibility for the safety and well-being of those detained;
 5. Underlines that the sentences imposed are politically motivated and urges the Russian judiciary to demonstrate its independence from political interference; calls on Russian authorities to put an end to the harassment of journalists and political and civil society activists, to fully respect international human rights obligations, guarantee media freedom and freedom of assembly; to enable the Russian people to exercise basic freedoms and

pursue legitimate political and civil society activities;

6. Strongly believes that the increasing authoritarianism in Russian politics must not be interpreted as the inability of the country to develop democratic values and institutions and expresses its full support to the democratic forces in Russia, committed to an open society and seeking for more freedoms and an economy not plagued by the Kremlin-fostered corruption;
7. Notes the corruption allegations against leading politicians, including against Prime Minister Medvedev, calls on the Commission, EEAS and on the Member States to take systemic action against any attempted money laundering or hiding of illegal assets inside the EU; equally instructs the Parliament's inquiry committee on Panama leaks to pay additional attention to any traces of suspect Russian money flows, in particular via EU based banks;
8. Urges the VP/HR, supported by the EEAS and the Commission to develop a strategy of deeper engagement with the Russian population and civil society with a stronger emphasis on democracy, the rule of law and the human rights of the people in Russia and to develop a substantive and concrete strategy to support the Russian civil society and organisations; calls, furthermore, on the VP/HR and the Council to take into consideration the possibility to adopt sanctions on the Russian officials involved in the ongoing repression;
9. Is of the view that an important element of this strategy must be reaching out to Russian people, developing cultural and educational exchanges, scientific cooperation, as well as supporting civil society organisations; asks the Commission to focus available financial assistance on these areas;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, to the Council and the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, and the President, Government and Parliament of the Russian Federation.