

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1070/04  
by Olivier Dupuis (NI)  
to the Commission

Subject: Persecution of Andrei Mironov, the Russian pro-democracy and human rights activist

Andrei Mironov, a former dissident and Soviet political prisoner (who initiated and organised a series of confidential meetings between Russian and Chechen politicians in western Europe with a view to finding a political solution to the Russo-Chechen conflict through the mediation of European diplomats) was violently attacked on 3 June 2003 by a former member of the Russian police forces. The attack left him unconscious, with four open wounds as well as serious brain damage which has prevented him from returning to work. On 5 June 2003, two days after the attack, Mr Mironov went to a police station to report what had happened, in order to make sure the offence did not go unpunished and to obtain compensation for the serious harm suffered. In September, Mr Mironov discovered that the police had refused to register his complaint and had decided to clear the person responsible for the attack. In order to denounce this serious failing on the part of the authorities, Mr Viacheslav Igrunov, a member of the Duma at the time, wrote to the Public Prosecutor of Moscow, the Public Prosecutor of the district responsible for the inquiry, and the Chief of Police of Moscow. For its part, the 'Frontline Defenders' human rights association referred the Mironov affair to the Attorney General of Russia. On 6 January 2004, the Russian judicial authorities decided not to pursue the criminal inquiry on the basis of a police report stating that the injuries suffered by Mr Mironov were very slight, despite all the medical files produced by Mr Mironov proving that the injuries were serious. The acts of intimidation against Mr Mironov continued until he was admitted to a neurological clinic in Germany on 11 January 2004, and there is nothing to suggest that they will not resume when he returns.

Is the Commission aware of the Mironov affair? If so, what action has it taken or will it take to ensure that the Russian judicial authorities punish those responsible for the criminal attack and that Mr Mironov is granted fair compensation? More generally, does the Commission not agree that the escalation of acts of intimidation, harassment, repression and aggression towards pro-democracy and human rights campaigners is becoming a matter of extreme concern and tends to confirm the drift towards an authoritarian, police state in Russia? What action does the Commission intend to take to counter this worrying trend?