

**Question for oral answer O-000102/2013  
to the Commission**

Rule 115

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on behalf of the ALDE Group

Subject: Rule of law and human rights in Russia

Since the adoption of several laws restricting freedom of expression, assembly and association, notably the 'Foreign Agents' law and federal and regional 'anti-propaganda' laws, numerous organisations have reported an increase in violent xenophobic and homophobic attacks in Russia.

Several hundred senselessly violent videos have emerged online showing ultra-nationalist groups beating and torturing LGBT individuals, migrants and those belonging to ethnic minorities. Russian NGOs monitoring these violations now face being closed down. NGOs and civil and political activists defending human rights are being intimidated and threatened by vigilante groups and the police.

There is ample evidence of unfair trials in which organisations, such as the Side-by-Side LGBT Film Festival, have been fined and forced to shut down. 'Coming Out Saint Petersburg' was fined the maximum amount under the 'Foreign Agents' law before seeing the sentence annulled by a higher court, but the organisation remains under threat of police inspections.

What has the Commission done to follow up on Parliament's resolution of 13 June 2013 on the rule of law in Russia?

In what terms did the Commission raise these issues with Russian leaders at the EU-Russia Summit in Yekaterinburg in June 2013 and at the G20 Summit in Saint Petersburg in September?

How will the Commission continue to raise its concerns regarding human rights and the rule of law in Russia?

Does the Commission consider that Russia is meeting the obligations of its membership of the Council of Europe? If not, should a thorough evaluation be carried out as to whether Russia's membership of the Council of Europe should be suspended?

Would the Commission be prepared to support EU-based LGBT organisations in providing Russian-language LGBT information on line?

Tabled: 2.10.2013

Forwarded: 4.10.2013

Deadline for reply: 11.10.2013