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*Committee on Foreign Affairs  
Committee on Development  
Subcommittee on Human Rights*

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12.9.2013

## **NOTICE TO MEMBERS**

Subject: **SAKHAROV PRIZE FOR FREEDOM OF THOUGHT 2013**

Members will find attached the list of candidates in alphabetical order, as well as the justifications and biographies received by the Human Rights Actions Unit, for the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought 2013, which have been nominated pursuant to the Sakharov Prize statute by at least 40 Members of the European Parliament or by a political group.

DIRECTORATE GENERAL  
FOR EXTERNAL POLICIES

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*United in diversity*

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# SAKHAROV PRIZE FOR FREEDOM OF THOUGHT 2013

Candidates proposed  
by political groups and individual members in alphabetical order

	Candidate	Activity	Nominated by
1	<p><b>Reeyot Alemu and Eskinder Nega</b></p>	<p>Reeyot Alemu and Eskinder Nega are Ethiopian journalists serving prison terms on charges of terrorism for criticising the government.</p> <p>Whilst jailed, Ms. Alemu was offered clemency if she agreed to testify against journalist colleagues. She refused and was punished with solitary confinement. Even after breast cancer surgery, she was immediately returned to the filthy Kality prison.</p> <p>Eskinder Nega was arrested in 2011 and charged under the country's Anti-Terrorism Proclamation, which he had criticised for being used to prosecute journalists and dissidents. A widely published independent journalist and a well-known government critic, Mr Nega had also written extensively about how an Arab Spring-like democracy movement might occur in Ethiopia.</p>	<p>Ana Maria Gomes and 40 other MEPs</p>

2	<p><b>Ales Bialatski, Eduard Lobau and Mykola Statkevich on behalf of all Belarusian political prisoners</b></p>	<p>Nearly three years after the mass peaceful demonstration in Minsk's Independence Square on December 19, 2010, against the rigged presidential election in Belarus confirming the dictatorial rule of Alexander Lukashenko, activists and opposition politicians are still imprisoned or have limited freedom.</p> <p>Those in jail include 2010 presidential candidate Mykola Statkevich, "Malady Front" activist Eduard Lobau, and one of those who tried to help them, Ales Bialatski, president of the Human Rights Centre "Viasna".</p> <p>They are under physical and mental pressure and not allowed to see their families and lawyers, isolated to the point of letters and newspapers being kept from them. However they resist because they believe that their fight for a free and democratic Belarus makes sense.</p>	<p>Marek Migalski, Filip Kaczmarek, Jacek Protasiewicz and 39 other MEPs</p>
3	<p><b>Mikhail Khodorkovsky</b></p>	<p>Mikhail Khodorkovsky has served 10 years of a 14-year jail term in Russia. He was tried unfairly after promoting the development of democracy and civil society, and calling publicly, in 2003, on President Putin to account for the systemic corruption. Unlike other oligarchs, he refused to submit or flee, but stood up in court and demanded an independent judicial system and respect for the rule of law.</p>	<p>Werner Schulz and 40 other MEPs</p>

4	<b>Edward Snowden</b>	Whistle-blower Edward Joseph Snowden (born in 1983, USA) disclosed extensive classified information about mass surveillance programmes of communications. Through his action, Mr Snowden revealed systematic and widespread violation of fundamental rights, notably freedom of expression and the right to privacy, by these spying programmes, and triggered a ground-breaking, global debate on issues of mass surveillance, government secrecy and information privacy.	Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance and Confederal Group of the European United Left -Nordic Green Left
5	<b>"Standing Man" protests in Turkey</b>	The peaceful protests in reaction to the increasing restriction of civil rights and fundamental freedoms took the form of silent, standing protests, first portrayed by Erdem Gündüz. These protests, initially over a planned construction project, represent the vast movement in Turkey of people yearning for a free and liberal society which respects human rights, fundamental freedoms and minorities.	Marietje Schaake and 40 other MEPs
6	<b>The CNN Freedom Project: Ending Modern-Day Slavery</b>	"Freedom Project: Ending Modern-day Slavery" is a global media campaign against the slave trade, human trafficking, forced and child labour. Its over 400 reports have exposed the suffering of victims from Mauritania to India to the Philippines. It empowers and protects local organizations that spearhead the fight for freedom and has compelled national governments and global institutions to act.	Boris Zala and 40 other MEPs

7	<b>Malala Yousafzai</b>	<p>Malala Yousafzai, 16, fights for the right to female education, freedom and self-determination in Pakistan's Swat Valley, where the Taliban regime has banned girls from attending school. In 2012, a Taliban gunman boarded her school bus, asked for her by name and shot her and two girls sitting next to her, in an attempt to kill her and "teach a lesson" to anyone associated with her and her fight. She survived the shooting and continues her campaign.</p>	<p>EPP Group: José Ignacio Salafranca, Elmar Brok, Michael Gahler, Arnaud Danjean, Joseph Daul, Gay Mitchell, Mairead McGuinness;  S&amp;D Group: Hannes Swoboda, Véronique de Keyser;  ALDE Group: Guy Verhofstadt, Sir Graham Watson, Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck;  Jean Lambert  ECR Group</p>
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## **Reeyot Alemu and Eskinder Nega**

**Nominated by Ana Maria Gomes and 40 other MEPs**



**Reeyot Alemu** is an Ethiopian journalist serving a five-year term at Kality Prison on baseless terrorism charges lodged after she wrote columns critical of the government. Ms. Alemu has previously written many critical columns for several independent publications including Fethi, Awramba Times, and the now-defunct Change magazine, in which she sometimes criticized the ruling party's politics, including its five-year growth and transformation plan, according to news reports.

Ms. Alemu was sentenced in January 2012 and fined 33,000 birrs (US\$1,500) under Ethiopia's sweeping anti-terrorism law for planning and conspiring a terrorist act; possessing property for terrorist acts; and participating in the promotion or communication of a terrorist act, according to local journalists. An appeals court in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital, has reduced a 14-year prison sentence given to five years and dropped two of the terrorism charges against her, upholding the last one.

While in jail, Ms. Alemu was offered clemency if she agreed to testify against journalist colleagues. She refused and was sent to solitary confinement for 13 days as punishment for her failure to cooperate. She is currently being kept at Kality prison, which is known for its filthy conditions. In 2012 she has fallen ill and underwent surgery at nearby hospital to remove a tumour from her breast, after which she was returned to jail with no recovery time.

Reeyot Alemu is the winner of the 2012 Courage in Journalism Award from the International Women's Media Foundation and the 2013 UNESCO-Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize. She was recommended by an independent international jury of media professionals in recognition of her “exceptional courage, resistance and commitment to freedom of expression.”



**Eskinder Nega**, 43, is a prominent Ethiopian journalist who was convicted and sentenced to 18 years in prison on terrorism charges. Prior to his detention, Mr. Nega was a widely published independent journalist and a well-known critic of late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi's government. Mr. Nega is married and the father of one son.

Mr. Nega began his work as an independent journalist in 1993 when he founded the Ethiopis newspaper. While Ethiopis and many of the other publications where Mr. Nega later worked were banned, he continued to write articles criticizing the Ethiopian regime's abuses of power. As a result of his critical reporting, the government has detained Mr. Nega on eight different occasions.

Prior to his most recent detention, Mr. Nega published an online column criticizing the prosecution of journalists and dissidents under Ethiopia's overly-broad 2009 Anti-Terrorism Proclamation and calling for an end to politically motivated prosecutions. In the months prior to his arrest, he had also written extensively about how an Arab Spring-like democracy movement might occur in Ethiopia.

On September 14, 2011, authorities arrested Mr. Nega and eventually charged him under the country's Anti-Terrorism Proclamation and accused him of membership in the banned Ginbot 7 political party.

Mr. Nega's arrest and trial have been condemned by reputable human rights organizations as politically motivated. The U.N. Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ruled that Ethiopia has violated international law by imprisoning Eskinder for the "peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of expression.

Mr. Nega was convicted on terrorism charges on June 27, 2012 and the court sentenced him to 18 years in prison on July 13, 2012. After postponing his appeal numerous times, the Ethiopian Federal Supreme Court upheld Eskinder Nega's conviction and sentencing on May 2, 2013. One of the charges against him, "serving as a leader of a terrorist group" was dropped, but had no affect on sentencing.

In May 2012, PEN awarded him its 2012 Freedom to Write Award for his role as an advocate for freedom of the press and freedom of expression in Ethiopia.

## **Ales Bialatski, Eduard Lobau and Mykola Statkevich on behalf of all Belarusian political prisoners**

**Nominated by Marek Migalski, Filip Kaczmarek, Jacek Protasiewicz and 39 other MEPs**



On December 19, 2010 a peaceful demonstration against the rigged presidential elections in Belarus was held at the Independence Square in Minsk. Representatives of the pro-democratic opposition and thousands of Belarusians who were tired and dispirited under the rule of Alexander Lukashenko went to the streets of Minsk to stand against the dictatorship, continued violations of human rights and civil liberties in order to show that they want democratic change in the country.

Nearly three years after these events some activists as well as opposition politicians are still imprisoned or have limited freedom. They were punished by the Belarusian authorities for their wish of democratic change in the country and for their fight for the values that underpin the European Union - freedom, democracy and respect for human rights. They dedicated their freedom to the dream of free and democratic Belarus.

Among those who remain imprisoned due to the Independent Square events is the 2010 presidential candidate - **Mykola Statkevich**. As the repressions started already before the 19th of December young activists have been arrested the day before the big demonstration and some of them like a member of "Malady Front" - **Eduard Lobau** remain imprisoned until now. Belarusian authorities also punished human rights activists who were helping people detained on suspicion of participation in a demonstration at the Independence Square and their families. One of those people is **Ales Bialatski** - the president of the Human Rights Centre "Viasna", the vice-president of the International Federation for Human Rights who devoted his life to the fight for human rights and civil liberties in Belarus. He was sentenced to 4,5 years in a penal colony.

Although almost three years have passed and we should not forget about the Independence Square - the brutal suppression of peaceful demonstrators, mass arrests and political prisoners who are still kept in prisons by the last dictator of Europe. Mykola Statkevich, Ales Bialacki, Eduard Lobau and many others are a subject to arduous trial every day. They are under physical and mental pressure, they are not allowed to see their families and lawyers. Often letters and newspapers are not delivered in aim to isolate them from the outside world. However they resist because they believe that their fight makes sense. They have faith in the ideals and values that guided them through the Independence Square and they believe that Belarus thanks to their struggle and sacrifice finally will



be free and democratic.

Their attitude is characterized by extraordinary commitment, steadfastness in the struggle for free Belarus and courage in opposing the regime. They are silent heroes who struggle for the ideals and democratic values and were imprisoned by Lukashenko's regime. Despite this their fight continues and we should appreciate, support and honour it.

Rewarding the Belarusian political prisoners with prestigious Andrei Sakharov prize will honour not only their struggle but also other members of Belarusian civil society who dream about a free country.

## Mikhail Khodorkovsky

### Nominated by Werner Schulz and 40 other MEPs

#### An unbroken fighter for democracy, the rule of law and the social market economy in Russia

*“I am far from being an ideal person, but I am a person with an idea. For me, as for anybody, it is hard to live in prison, and I do not want to die there. But if I have to – I will not falter. What I believe in is worth dying for.”* (From Khodorkovsky’s closing statement, 2 November 2010)



**Mikhail Khodorkovsky** has been in detention for 10 years. He was sentenced to a total of 14 years imprisonment in **two politically motivated trials**. The well known legal expert and trial observer Prof. Otto Luchterhand has written: “The second judgement against Khodorkovsky far surpasses the first in arbitrariness and maliciousness. It is a disturbing document of the cynical perversion of the law, its open mockery.” The European Court of Human Rights ruled that the first trial against him was not fair; it has yet to issue its verdict on the second.

In the course of the privatization so dear to President Yeltsin’s heart and implemented at such a breath-taking pace, Mikhail Khodorkovsky built up the successful, modern and transparently run YUKOS petroleum company. President Putin first set his sights on Khodorkovsky when the latter began promoting the **development of democracy and civil society** in Russia through political and social activism and his projects – the Open Russia Foundation, the New Civilisation movement, the Federation of Internet Education and Schools of Public Policy – and his support of democratic parties. Unlike other oligarchs, he was unwilling to accept the alternatives on offer: submission or flight abroad. In February of 2003, he publically called President Putin and his team to account for the systemic corruption in his country. Afterwards, Khodorkovsky was arrested, his company broken up and taken over by the Kremlin’s ROSNEFT.

Khodorkovsky did not see the bars and barbed wire as restricting and confining, though: like Solzhenitsyn and Sakharov, he viewed them as a broadening experience. A flood of articles, letters and interviews issued from his prison cell, pieces pointing a way forward towards a **democratic and social Russia**. A Russia founded on the EU’s fundamental values. He responded to President Medvedev’s hollow promise of modernization with the essay “Generation M” (M=modernization), pointing out that if the much needed modernization is to

succeed social reforms will be needed as well as scientific and technical advances. That is predicated upon free people capable of independent thought. Which, in turn, requires respect for the constitution and the guarantee of civil rights and militates against the so called “managed democracy”. In his programme 2020, he set forth a design for a modern European country featuring both a democratic constitutional state and a social market economy. Free from oppression, bureaucratic despotism, corruption and lawlessness. Central to his vision is the legitimization of privatization, generally perceived as unfair, through the introduction of an appropriate windfall tax. Linked to that is the establishment of a social welfare system which would reflect Russia’s historical and psychological traditions.

Khodorkovsky is a political prisoner of Putin, who has recently accused him publically of murder. Putin is now having **a third criminal case prepared** against Khodorkovsky, to put him behind bars for good.

Khodorkovsky’s refusal to bend or break has long since rid him of the negative image of the oligarch. In the eyes of Russia’s civil society he has converted to the side of the good. This is evidenced by a letter from the winners of 2009 Sakharov Prize, who ask us to award this prize to Khodorkovsky for his unbroken political activism. He is a beacon of hope for the opposition and the developing civil society. **A figure symbolizing the common struggle against the ruling autocracy, repression and despotism, who is striving for a modern, European, peaceful and democratic Russia.** Awarding the prize to him should provide considerable impetus to those efforts and reduce the likelihood of Khodorkovsky being thrown in jail yet again.

Why should the EP award the Sakharov Prize to Mikhail Khodorkovsky?

- Because he has promoted the development of democracy and civil society in Russia through numerous activities and social projects, using his private fortune to do so.
- Because he had the courage to denounce the rampant corruption under President Putin, without regard to the personal consequences, and landed in prison on trumped up charges as a result.
- Because he stood up in court and steadfastly and persuasively demanded an independent judicial system and respect for the rule of law.
- Because he has proven himself to be a true patriot who places greater importance on the future of his country than his own wealth and wellbeing, in stark contrast to the nationalist rhetoric from the government and parliament.
- Because he has criticized the condition of the Russian state in countless pieces written from prison and proposed effective reforms.
- Because he has filled the hollow promise of modernization offered by President Medvedev with appropriate and targeted ideas and a mobilization of civil society forces.
- Because he tackled the issue of the largely unfair privatization of the Soviet economy and proposed the development of a social welfare system to overcome the extreme social gulf between rich and poor by imposing a windfall tax on the oligarchs.
- Because he has sketched out a path leading to a European, peaceful, modern and democratic Russia in his 2020 programme.
- Because his unbroken and exemplary stance has given others the courage to raise their own voices to protest the autocratic system.
- Because he represents a source of guidance and authority in the Russian opposition.

- Because the EU cannot stand silently by and watch him put on trial for a third time.
- Because he is a powerful advocate for understanding between Russia and the West and for a Europe-oriented Russia

## Edward Snowden

### Nominated by the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance and the Confederal Group of the European United Left - Nordic Green Left

**EDWARD SNOWDEN** - whistle-blower defending the right to privacy and freedom of expression

Whistle-blower **Edward Joseph Snowden** (born in 1983, USA) disclosed extensive classified information about mass surveillance programmes of communications. Through his action, Mr Snowden revealed systematic and widespread violation of fundamental rights, notably freedom of expression and the right to privacy, by these spying programmes, and triggered a ground-breaking, global debate on issues of mass surveillance, government secrecy and information privacy.

A former contractor for the USA National Security Agency (NSA), Mr Snowden leaked thousands of NSA documents revealing deeply intrusive and covert programmes of mass phone and internet interception in May 2013, before fleeing to Hong Kong and subsequently being granted temporary asylum in Russia.

The NSA exposure has had colossal repercussions globally, including initiating intensive public debates on privacy, data protection, corporate complicity and the limits of domestic and foreign surveillance and the launch of parliamentary inquiries. The information revealed by Mr Snowden is of direct relevance to all EU citizens given the systematic and massive nature of the surveillance programmes. Moreover, several Member States and EU offices were revealed to have been spied upon. Commissioner Reding has sent a questionnaire to Washington and has requested an explanation, and the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the NSA surveillance programmes in July 2013 and launched an inquiry.

Mr Snowden has stated, "the public needs to know the kinds of things a government does in its name, or the "consent of the governed" is meaningless." Amnesty International stated that "what he has disclosed is patently in the public interest and as a whistleblower his actions were justified. He has exposed unlawful sweeping surveillance programmes that unquestionably interfere with an individual's right to privacy. States that attempt to stop a person from revealing such unlawful behaviour are flouting international law. Freedom of expression is a fundamental right".

By awarding the Sakharov Prize to Mr Snowden, the Parliament would:

- express support to Mr Snowden in his current ordeal and underline the need for adequate protection for whistle-blowers and investigative journalists;
- acknowledge that whistle-blowers can have a significant impact on the enjoyment of human rights by revealing, at their own risk, the truth about unacceptable government or corporate practice, and thus may be considered as human rights defenders;
- highlight that State surveillance programmes may undermine the right to privacy, internet freedom and freedom of expression, and that corrective action should be taken.

## **"Standing Man" protests in Turkey**

### **Nominated by Marietje Schaake and 40 other MEPs**

The peaceful protest movement in reaction to the increased restriction of civil rights and fundamental freedoms in Turkey took the form of silent and standing protests.

First portrayed by choreographer Erdem Gündüz and afterwards a symbol of peaceful protests against violent police action.

This June protests broke out in Turkey over a planned construction project in Istanbul's city centre. Prime Minister Erdogan was a driving force behind the project.

While there was widespread anger over the construction project the increased erosion of the rule of law, democracy and human rights in Turkey where the true underlying reasons for massive protests.

The EU has consistently voiced its grave concerns over press and media freedom in Turkey; in no other country more journalists are jailed.

Millions of Turks have drawn a clear line and stood for their rights and freedoms and the European Parliament should support this call by awarding the Sakharov-prize.

The silent protests represent the vast movement in Turkey of people yearning for a free and liberal society of which respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and minorities lie at the heart.

They deserve our full backing and appreciation.

## **The CNN Freedom Project: Ending Modern- Day Slavery**

### **Nominated by Boris Zala and 40 other MEPs**



**"Freedom Project: Ending Modern-day Slavery"** is a campaign against global slave trade, human trafficking, forced and child labor.

Having produced over 400 reports, the Freedom Project is unprecedented in the history of both journalism and civic advocacy: it harnesses the power of a global media to systematically address a singular form of injustice.

From Mauretania to India to the Philippines, the Project exposes the sufferings of slave victims, the cruelty of criminal gangs and the greed of modern-day slave masters (some US and EU companies among them). Its impact-oriented reports have **succeeded in mobilizing a broad coalition of political and social actors, thus compelling national governments and global institutions to act.**

Just as importantly, the "Freedom Project" empowers and protects local organizations who spearhead the fight for freedom in affected countries.

Through its innovative blend of investigative reports, social media and other interactive tools, **the "Freedom Project" pioneers a new model of human rights campaigning for the interconnected world of the 21st century.**

For its ingenuity, sense of moral purpose, and determination to push a neglected tragedy onto the centre of global attention, the "Freedom Project" is hereby nominated for the Sakharov Prize 2013.



## **Malala Yousafzai**

**Nominated by José Ignacio Salafranca, Elmar Brok, Michael Gahler, Arnaud Danjean, Joseph Daul, Gay Mitchell, Mairead McGuinness on behalf of the Group of the European People's Party; Hannes Swoboda and Véronique de Keyser on behalf of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament; Guy Verhofstadt, Sir Graham Watson, Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck on behalf of the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe; Jean Lambert; and the European Conservatives and Reformists Group**



**Malala Yousafzai** (Born on 01 July 1997) is a student from the town of Mingora in Swat District, Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa, Pakistan, known for her women's rights activism in the Swat Valley, where the Taliban regime has banned girls from attending school. On 9 October 2012, Malala was shot in the head and neck in an assassination attempt by Taliban gunmen while returning home on a school bus.

She has received medical care in the United Kingdom and has now started school there. Numerous global organisations have called for support for Malala's case. Namely PEN and its activist Mariela Baeva, former MEP, who has highlighted this case to us are fighting for the message behind Malala's struggle - saying "no" to any regime that deprives a young person from the value of education.

### **Life**

Taliban's influence grew in Pakistan; in 2007 Taliban consolidated the power in Swat. In 2008 a failed military campaign to retake the Swat valley results in a wave of terror with Taliban targeting government buildings and girls' schools which Taliban leader Maulana Fazlullah argued were against Islamic teachings.

In September 2008 eleven-year old Malala Yousafzai gave the first public speech entitled "How dare the Taliban take away my basic right to an education".

In January 2009 Mullah Fazlullah, Taliban's leader, announced that all girls' schools will be closed. Malala has started a blog for BBC Urdu under pseudonym of Gul Makai, a folklore heroine. The blog has brought fame to Malala and her fight. TV interviews have followed

where she said "All I want is an education. And I am afraid of no one". The threats to her family followed as soon as Malala's father revealed that she is the author of the BBC blog.

### **Assassination attempt**

On the 9th of October, Taliban gunman boarded her school bus, asked for her by name and shot her and two other girls sitting next to her. This was an attempt to kill Malala and "teach a lesson" to anyone associated with her and her fight for the right to education, freedom and self-determination of young girls and women in Pakistan.

Malala was critically injured, shot in the neck and head but she has survived the attack. After receiving the initial healthcare in Pakistan, she was taken to the United Kingdom. She has responded well to treatment and her family has joined her in the UK. However, her cause and the lives of her family and her associates in Pakistan are still in danger today.

### **Achievements**

Following her public appearances as an active supporter of anti-Taliban movement from the age of eleven, Malala has gained global recognition as a human rights fighter. She was a runner-up for the International Children's Peace Prize. She won Pakistan's National Youth Peace Prize which is now named in her honour. She is currently nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

President Zardari has announced the establishment of a \$10 million education fund in Malala's name.

The movie based on her life is currently in production. However, the actors and production team are afraid for their and their families' safety. Filming is expected to commence in July.

Malala is due to publish a book entitled 'I am Malala' later this year.

Numerous international organisations are fighting for Malala and the 32 million girls like Malala who were deprived from the access to education by Taliban regime.

*In the attempt to silence the voice of this courageous young woman, Taliban has amplified it and made her a symbol that shall remain in history.*