

FOREIGN AFFAIRS
HUMAN RIGHTS

Closure of Human Rights Watch office in Uzbekistan

Brussels - Thursday 16/06/2011

The President of the European Parliament, Jerzy Buzek, made the following statement on the forced closure of Human Rights Watch offices in Uzbekistan:

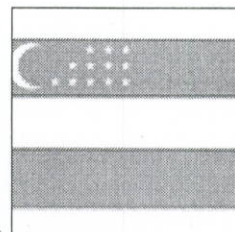
"I am very disappointed about the decision of the Supreme Court of Uzbekistan to annul the registration of Human Rights Watch's office in Tashkent.

In particular, I am disappointed by the fact that the decision seems to have been taken without careful and due consideration, endorsing the request of the Uzbek Ministry of Justice, after only a few minutes of deliberation.

I regard the closure of the offices of Human Rights Watch after 15 years of presence in the country as a very serious step in the wrong direction. Human Rights Watch has been hindered before in its activities despite being a highly respected international NGO.

I call upon the government of Uzbekistan to respect its international obligations and commitments. Human Rights Watch and other civil society organisations must be able to continue their important work in defence of those who are deprived of their rights. The respect of human rights and democracy is the only solid basis for lasting stability and prosperity.

For the EU and the European Parliament in particular, progress in the area of human rights, democracy and the rule of law will always remain a criterion of paramount importance in choosing the level of engagement with our partners."



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