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## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

tabled for the debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 115 of the Rules of Procedure

by Toomas Savi, István Szent-Iványi, Paavo Väyrynen and Henrik Lax

on behalf of the ALDE Group

on the breaches of human rights and democracy in the Mari Republic (Mari El) of the Russian Federation

PE 357.371

**B6-0292/2005**

**European parliament resolution on the breaches of human rights and democracy in the Mari Republic (Mari El) of the Russian Federation**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Russia, and in particular that of 15 December 2004, and to its recommendation to the Council on EU-Russia relations of 26 February 2004,
  - having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EC and Russia, which entered into force on 1 December 1997,
  - having regard to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and in particular to Art. 10 thereof,
  - having regard to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages signed by the Russian Federation on 10 May 2001,
  - having regard to the Constitution of the Mari Republic (Mari El) that recognises Mari as one of the State languages, and to the 1995 Act on Linguistic Matters that declares Mari El a multiethnic republic and provides for the right of all citizens regardless of their ethnicity to maintain and develop their native language and culture,
  - having regard to the credible reports by Russian and international NGOs on the continuing violations of human rights and irregularities before and during the presidential elections of 19 December 2004 in the Mari Republic (Mari El) of the Russian Federation,
  - having regard to Rule 115 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas journalists and correspondents of non-state mass media have been continuously and frequently assaulted, harassed and intimidated in Mari El, including the killing of three journalists in 2001 and the beating of Mr Vladimir KOZLOV on 4 February 2005;
- B. whereas the local and federal governments have failed to take adequate steps to bring the perpetrators to justice and ensure the safety of journalists and the independence of the media;
- C. whereas several opposition newspapers are forced to be printed outside the Mari Republic;
- D. whereas the government of Mari El has threatened to close down schools in regions that voted overwhelmingly for the opposition candidate during the presidential elections, and forced to resign a dozen school directors in these areas;
- E. whereas individuals belonging to the Mari minority face considerable difficulties in obtaining education in their native language since there is no secondary or higher education in Mari, and the publication of Mari textbooks has severely declined in the past years;

1. Is convinced that the multiethnic character of the Russian Federation greatly contributes to the cultural and linguistic diversity of Europe, and is a phenomenon that all citizens of the Russian Federation are justifiably proud of, and that should be preserved for the benefit of all Europeans;
2. Strongly condemns the harassment and assault of independent journalists in Mari El, and calls on the federal and local authorities to bring the perpetrators of such acts to justice, and ensure the respect for the freedom of expression;
3. Calls for a speedy, comprehensive and independent inquiry by federal and local authorities of the allegations on irregularities before and during the presidential elections in Mari El on 4 February 2005;
4. Calls on the Government of Mari El to immediately stop political retribution and intimidation directed at dissenting public servants, and refrain from undue political interference in the affairs of educational and cultural institutions;
5. Calls on the local and federal authorities to respect their obligations under international law, and to take adequate steps to facilitate the practical implementation of the provisions of the State Constitution and other legislation relating to the maintenance and development of minority languages and cultures, with particular emphasis on providing quality education in one's native language on all levels, thus securing that the Mari language and Russian are placed on the same footing throughout the republic;
6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the Governments of the Russian Federation and Mari El.

