

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

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*Session document*

18.10.2006

B6-0531/2006

## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on statements by the Council and Commission

pursuant to Rule 103(2) of the Rules of Procedure

by Marielle De Sarnez, Jean-Marie Cavada, Margarita Starkevičiūtė, Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne and Karin Riis-Jørgensen

on behalf of the ALDE Group

on the murder of the Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya

**European Parliament resolution on the murder of the Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), which entered into force on December 1 1997 and sets the objective of consolidating democracy and civil liberties in the Russian Federation,
  - having regard to its previous resolutions and declarations concerning the freedom of the press and freedom of speech in Russia, and in particular the Malmström report of 4 May 2005,
  - having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. recalling the obligations incumbent on the Russian Federation in the field of human rights, not least owing to it having held the presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe since May 2006,
- B. whereas murders in the form of the execution of political opponents are a disturbing phenomenon in Russia,
- C. whereas Russia has become one of the most dangerous countries for journalists, with 21 journalists having been killed there as a consequence of their professional activities since 26 March 2000<sup>1</sup>, the date on which Vladimir Putin was elected President of the Russian Federation,
- D. whereas the investigations into those murders have been marred by irregularities and in most cases the murderers have never been identified,
- E. whereas there is real concern among the public, both inside and outside Russia, at the growing erosion of the freedom of the press and of freedom of speech, in a climate increasingly deleterious to civil society and NGOs,
1. Condemns in the strongest terms the murder of Anna Politkovskaya on 7 October and urges the Russian authorities to launch an independent and effective enquiry to find those responsible for this crime and bring them to justice;
  2. Expresses its sincere condolences to Anna Politkovskaya's family and pays tribute to her work and everything she did as an especially respected journalist considered to be the symbol of honest journalism in Russia, and as someone who stood up in defence of human life and dignity and exposed and reported frankly on all types of violation of human rights, not least in Chechnya;

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Reporters Without Borders

3. Expresses its solidarity with Anna Politkovskaya's colleagues at the Novaya Gazeta newspaper and with all Russian journalists working in the same dangerous and difficult circumstances;
4. Stresses that this crime followed intimidation, harassment and a series of systematic murders of independent journalists and of other persons critical of the government, and points out that the resulting climate of impunity in which the law holds no fears for killers is seriously prejudicial to Russia's reputation at a time when it holds the presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe;
5. Calls for an investigation to be launched under the auspices of the Council of Europe or the United Nations Council of Human Rights to ensure that this crime does not go unpunished in the same way as the murder of Paul Klebnikov in 2004;
6. Stresses how dangerous it is for democracy to allow the proliferation of the ultranationalist and extremist groups and parties which are contributing to the decay of Russian society by fuelling a climate of hate and suspicion;
7. Points out that the Russian authorities and leaders are obliged to guarantee the rule of law and uphold fundamental human rights and democratic values; emphasises that the freedom of the media, the safety of journalists and of human rights activists and the freedom of civil society and NGOs to work and take action are one of the mainstays of a genuine democracy;
8. Expresses its concern at the gradual dismantling of the freedom of the press, a process which started many years ago, and at the absence of pluralism in the audiovisual sector, not least with the approach of the general elections in 2007 and the presidential election in 2008;
9. Urges the Commission and the EU Member States to take a clear stance on restoration of the freedom of the press and respect for independent journalism, with this being a crucial factor in the negotiations on the renewal of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement in 2007;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to Anna Politkovskaya's family, the Commission, the Council, the Member States, the Council of Europe, the United Nations Secretary-General, and the Duma and President of the Russian Federation.