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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for the debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 122 of the Rules of Procedure

on the murder of human rights activists in Russia

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on behalf of the PPE Group

European Parliament resolution on the murder of human rights activists in Russia

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 25 October 2006 on EU-Russia relations following the murder of the Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 18 December 2008 on attacks on human rights defenders in Russia and the Anna Politkovskaya murder trial,
- having regard to the declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union of 12 August 2009 on the murders of Chechen human rights defender Zarema Sadulayeva and her husband Alik Dzhabrailov,
- having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the Russian Federation, which entered into force in 1997 and has been extended pending its replacement by a new agreement,
- having regard to the ongoing negotiations for a new agreement providing a new comprehensive framework for EU-Russia relations,
- having regard to Rule 122(5) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. Whereas Russia is a member state of the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe that has committed itself to fully respect human and citizens' rights;

B. Whereas there is an alarming deterioration of the situation of human rights defenders in particular in the North Caucasus;

C. Whereas the work of human rights organisations such as Memorial and Demos is essential for the creation of a stable and free society; whereas the Russian government should therefore be proud of the important role played by such institutions;

D. Whereas the human rights lawyer Stanislav Markelov who had also represented the assassinated journalist Anna Politkovskaya, was assassinated on 20 January 2009 together with the journalist Anastasia Barburova who died trying to protect Mr. Markelov;

E. Whereas Natalya Estemirova, the 2005 EPP Schuman Medal laureate together with Russian dissident Sergei Kovalev, and head of Memorial in Chechnya was abducted, on 15 July 2009 in Grozny and found dead in neighbouring Ingushetia; whereas the European Parliament held a minute's silence in memory of Natalya Estemirova in its session on 16 July 2009; whereas following this murder the work of Memorial in Chechnya has been suspended;

¹ OJ C 313 E, 20.12.2006, p. 271.

F. Whereas on 10 August 2009, Chechen civil society activists Zarema Sadulayeva and her husband, Alik Dzhabraïlov, working for the humanitarian organisation 'Save the Generation', were abducted from their office in Grozny and found murdered the next day;

G. Whereas on 3 December 2008, the St. Petersburg offices of the Research and Information Centre Memorial were raided by masked men from the Russian General Prosecutor's Office and hard drives and CDs containing the entire database about thousands of victims of Stalinist repression were taken away; whereas the database was returned to Memorial following a court order;

H. Whereas on 3 September 2009 the apartment buildings where Oleg Orlov, Head of the Human Rights Centre Memorial, and his collaborator Alexander Tcherkassov have their private homes have been inspected by government investigators pretending to work for the tax authority; whereas the tax authority denied any involvement in this activity and stated that it did not use such practice making it clear that this action was led by other authorities;

I. Whereas the trial on the murder of the widely respected independent investigative journalist Anna Politkovskaya will be re-negotiated;

1. Strongly deplores the numerous attacks on the lives of human rights defenders in Russia, including lawyers who are representing citizens' rights;
2. Urges the Russian authorities to do everything in their power to ensure the protection of human rights defenders, as affirmed in the UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms; calls in particular on the responsible authorities to create circumstances that allow Memorial and other human rights organisations to resume their activities in Chechnya in a safe environment;
3. Calls on the Russian federal authorities to swiftly, thoroughly and effectively investigate the murder of Stanislav Markelov, Natalya Estemirova, Zarema Sadulayeva and Alik Dzhabraïlov and bring those responsible for and also those involved in these brutal acts to justice;
4. Welcomes the return of the confiscated archive of the organisation Memorial in St. Petersburg following the raid on 4 December 2008;
5. Welcomes the decision of the Russian Supreme Court of 3 September 2009 to renegotiate the murder trial of Anna Politkovskaya and to treat the investigations against the three men that have been acquitted in the first trial in one single case with the alleged assassin Ruslan Machmudow and those who sponsored him; calls for this trial to be begun as soon as possible, to be a jury procedure and the process to be open to all journalists and media;
6. Notes with concern the development of a public campaign to re-write Soviet history and, in fact, rehabilitate the Stalinist regime;
7. Stresses its position that the protection of human rights should be a privileged item on the

agenda of the next EU-Russia summit and become an integral part of the new EU - Russia agreement;

8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Parliaments and governments of the Member States, the government and Parliament of the Russian Federation, the OSCE and the Council of Europe.