



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Plenary sitting

11.3.2014

B7-0248/2014

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

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

pursuant to Rule 122 of the Rules of Procedure

on Russia: sentencing of demonstrators involved in Bolotnaya Square events (2014/2628(RSP))

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on behalf of the ECR Group

European Parliament resolution on Russia: sentencing of demonstrators involved in Bolotnaya Square events (2014/2628(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the existing Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between the European Communities and their Member States, on the one part, and the Russian Federation, on the other part¹, and the negotiations initiated in 2008 on a new EU-Russia agreement,
- having regard to the statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton of 11 May 2012, on the arrests of opposition leaders in Moscow and of 12 June 2012 on the new law on public rallies,
- having regard to statement by the Spokesperson of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the sentencing of demonstrators involved in the Bolotnaya Square events, 24 February 2014,
- having regard to the EU-Russia human rights consultations,
- having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 13 June 2013 on the rule of law in Russia, as well as to its other reports and resolutions on EU-Russia relations, situation in Russia and last Duma and presidential elections in Russia,
- having regard to Russia's international obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Helsinki Final Act and membership of the OSCE, and membership of the Council of Europe and being a signatory to European Convention on Human Rights,
- having regard to Rule 122 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - A. whereas the March of Millions in Moscow on May 6, 2012 was planned as a major demonstration to protest against the recent Presidential election and the forthcoming inauguration of President Putin,
 - B. whereas hundreds of peaceful anti-government protesters were arrested during the Bolotnaya Square protest which police dispersed using excessive and disproportionate force and whereas criminal proceedings have subsequently been initiated against 28 individuals in connection with their alleged participation in the organisation of or incitement to "mass riots" under Article 212 of the Russian Criminal Code;
 - C. whereas during the march, there was a significant mobilisation of police forces, and the authorities placed restrictions on access to Bolotnaya Square, and whereas violence broke out before the majority of demonstrators could reach the rally point,

¹ OJ L 327, 28.11.1997, p. 3.

- D. whereas on February 24th seven of the defendants were sentenced to prison terms of two-and-a-half to four years each and the eighth person received three years' probation;
- E. whereas on 3 October 2013, Amnesty International declared 3 people standing trial in relation to the Bolotnaya Square protest to be prisoners of conscience; whereas of these, Vladimir Akimenkov and Artem Savelov continue to be imprisoned, while Mikhail Kosenko has been sentenced to forcible treatment in a psychiatric hospital;
- F. whereas more than 200 supporters who gathered outside the court on February 24th were detained for "attempts to breach public order", among which were Alexey Navalny, Boris Nemtsov and Ilia Yashin, leaders of the Russian opposition, as well as Nadezhda Tolokonnikova and Maria Alyokhina, members of the Pussy Riot punk group;
1. Condemns the harsh verdict of prison sentences passed by the Moscow Zamoskvoretsky District Court against seven convicted of being involved in the Bolotnaya Square events of 6 May 2012 and stresses that the charges brought against them and their sentences are disproportionate in light of the nature of the events and the offences they are accused of;
 2. Condemns the detention of people protesting outside the Moscow Court on 24th February and demands the dropping of all charges against them;
 3. Highlights that an independent investigative commission formed by the opposition party RPR-PARNAS, the December 12 Roundtable civil group, and the May 6 Committee has blamed the Russian authorities and police for the violence that erupted at an opposition protest on Moscow's Bolotnaya Square;
 4. Is convinced that it is no coincidence that the severe sentences were announced the day after closing the Sochi Olympics;
 5. Stresses that freedom of assembly in the Russian Federation is granted by Art. 31 of Russian constitution and under the European Convention of Human Rights to which Russia is a signatory and therefore Russian authorities are obliged to respect it;
 6. Is convinced that the Bolotnaya Square trial and later detentions are another example of increasing lack of freedom of expression and assembly in Russia;
 7. Calls on the EU VP/HR to closely monitor the situation of those sentenced in the Bolotnaya Square unrest as well as their supporters;
 8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Government and Parliament of Russian Federation.