



Plenary sitting

B9-0351/2021

8.6.2021

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 144 of the Rules of Procedure

on the listing of German NGOs as ‘undesirable organisations’ by Russia and the detention of Andrei Pivovarov
(2021/2749(RSP))

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on behalf of the S&D Group

B9-0351/2021

European Parliament resolution on the listing of German NGOs as ‘undesirable organisations’ by Russia and the detention of Andrei Pivovarov (2021/2749(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Russia,
 - having regard to the EEAS statements of 1 June 2021 on the detention of Andrei Pivovarov and of 27 May 2021 on the listing of German NGOs as “undesirable organisations”,
 - having regard to the Constitution of the Russian Federation and to the international human rights obligations to which Russia has committed itself as Member of the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations (UN),
 - having regard to the European Convention on Human Rights and the Protocols thereto, in particular Article 10 on the right to freedom of expression and Article 11 on the right to freedom of assembly and association,
 - having regard to the Opinion of the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe on Federal Law No. 129-Fz on amending certain legislative acts (Federal Law on undesirable activities of foreign and international non-governmental organisations) of 13 June 2016,
 - having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure.
- A. whereas the exercise of freedom of opinion, expression, association and peaceful assembly is a fundamental right enshrined in the constitution of the Russian Federation as well as in numerous international legal instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the European Convention on Human Rights, all of which Russia has committed itself to;
- B. whereas on 19 May 2015 the State Duma of the Russian Federation adopted legislation on so-called “undesirable organisations” which entered into force on 3 June 2015 and is used to restrict the freedom of association by prohibiting the activities of certain NGOs and by introducing administrative and criminal sanctions linked to their activities;
- C. whereas on 18 May 2021, the State Duma adopted two bills in first reading that aim to broaden the scope of the law on “undesirable” organisations by introducing a prohibition on participation in their activities abroad, assigning the status of “undesirable” to organisations who are believed to be intermediaries in financial transactions with those already banned, and toughening criminal sanctions;
- D. whereas on 26 May 2021, the Russian Prosecutor General listed three German NGOs as

“undesirable organisations” - Forum Russischsprachiger Europäer e.V., Zentrum für die Liberale Moderne GmbH, and Deutsch-Russischer Austausch e.V., all three headquartered in Berlin;

- E. whereas on 27 May 2021, the Russian organisation “Open Russia” announced that it would cease its activities to protect its members from criminal prosecution under the Russian legislation on “undesirable organisations”;
 - F. whereas on 31 May 2021, Andrei Pivovarov, a former Executive Director of “Open Russia”, was removed from a plane in Saint Petersburg and detained for alleged violations of the legislation on “undesirable organisations”;
 - G. whereas these latest legislative restrictions and targeted prosecutions are part of a recently intensified crackdown on Russian civil society and ever more excessive efforts of Russian authorities to curtail fundamental freedoms, reduce the space for activities by independent media and civil society actors and silence critical voices and political opposition ahead of the parliamentary elections in September 2021;
 - H. whereas the growing repression by Russian authorities against civil society and political opposition reveals the authorities' fear of popular discontent with the poor socio-economic performance and the corruption of the ruling class;
1. Calls on the Russian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Andrei Pivovarov, former Executive Director of “Open Russia”, to repeal the decision to list three German NGOs as “undesirable organisations”, and to stop the crackdown on individuals or organisations that engage in civic activism or the promotion of democracy, fundamental freedoms and human rights, intercultural dialogue and understanding, and international cooperation;
 2. Urges the Russian authorities to remove from the respective list all those organisations previously added and to repeal the legislation on “undesirable organisations” as well as other legislation that restricts fundamental freedoms and human rights, bringing it in line with the commitments Russia has freely assumed under European and international human rights law and guarantees under its own constitution;
 3. Calls on the State Duma of the Russian Federation to refrain from adopting additional legislation under preparation that would ban staff or supporters of organisations arbitrarily listed as “undesirable” from running in elections;
 4. Calls on the Russian Federation to acknowledge the positive contribution of a vibrant and active civil society to the state of democracy and society; urges the Russian authorities to guarantee an enabling environment in which civil society organisations and activists can contribute freely to the promotion and protection of human rights, fundamental freedoms and societal wellbeing;
 5. Underlines that civil society also plays a crucial role in promoting dialogue, mutual understanding, peace and prosperity and that international cooperation cannot be limited to governments but must include societal dialogue; therefore regrets that the Russian authorities voluntarily close previously established channels and fora for dialogue and partnership, thereby further limiting the prospects for constructive relations and for

cooperation on issues of mutual interest;

6. Insists on the need to continue civil society cooperation with Russia and therefore calls for the EU's new and comprehensive strategy for relations with Russia to address the increasing obstacles that Russian authorities put in the way of people-to-people contacts, civil society cooperation and support to Russian civil society organisations;
7. Calls on the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States to increase support for civil society, independent NGOs, human rights defenders, and independent media active in Russia, including through capacity-building and financial means, as well as to promote people-to-people contacts; emphasises that this cooperation with civil society must be a pillar of the forthcoming new EU strategic approach towards Russia;
8. Recommends the High Representative and the Member States to take coordinated action with like-minded countries to raise awareness and push back against the restrictions of fundamental freedoms and human rights by the Russian authorities, including through high-level and public interventions, coordinated demarches, sustained scrutiny at international and regional human rights fora, as well as regular human rights impact assessments;
9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission/ High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Council of Europe, the OSCE and to the President, Government and Parliament of the Russian Federation.