



Plenary sitting

B9-0338/2023

11.7.2023

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 crackdown on the media and freedom of expression in Kyrgyzstan

(2023/2782(RSP))

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on behalf of the Renew Group

Motion for a European Parliament resolution on crackdown on the media and freedom of expression in Kyrgyzstan

(2023/2782(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions,
 - having regard to the statements by the EEAS Spokesperson and the President of the European Council of 5 May and 5 June 2023 respectively;
 - having regard its Rule 144,
- A. whereas the EU and Kyrgyzstan concluded negotiations on a new Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, which contains provisions safeguarding freedom of the press, human rights, democracy and the rule of law; whereas protecting freedom of expression is an obligation under Kyrgyzstan’s GSP+ preferential trade regime with the EU;
- B. whereas a number of recent laws are being used to crack down on independent media and free expression, in particular the laws on “False information” and on “Protecting children from harmful information”; whereas Parliament is currently discussing two additional restrictive laws on “mass media” and on “Foreign representatives”;
- C. whereas media outlets and journalists have been targeted for their reporting on the border conflict with Tajikistan and for their criticism of the government’s decision on the Kempir-Abad water reservoir; whereas RFE/RL Radio Azattyk has been forced to close, kaktus.media is facing criminal investigation, investigative journalist Bolot Temirov was illegally expelled to Russia and stripped of his Kyrgyz citizenship and Next TV director Taalaibek Duishenbiev was unjustly sentenced for covering Russia’s war of aggression in Ukraine;
- D. whereas Kyrgyzstan lost 50 places compared to 2022 in the 2023 Reporters Without Borders Index and is now ranked 122nd out of 180 countries;
- E. whereas Kyrgyzstan is a member of the UN Human Rights Council and it recommitted to its international obligations in August 2022 when it submitted its candidacy for the 2023–2025 period;
1. Reminds the Kyrgyz authorities of the country’s chosen course of democratic development, historically enjoying the most vibrant independent media and civil society in Central Asia;
 2. Calls to withdraw the laws on “False information” and “Protecting children from harmful information”, and ensure any legislation in this field complies with international commitments on freedoms of opinion and expression;
 3. Urges the Kyrgyz Parliament to genuinely engage with media experts and revise the law on “mass media” to ensure it does not result in excessive state control over media activities, and to reject the proposed law on “Foreign representatives”, which contravenes

Kyrgyzstan's international obligations, including under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and would lead to excessive state oversight and restrictions on the activities of NGOs;

4. Urges the authorities to strengthen the protection of bloggers, journalists, human rights defenders and government critics and to end the unprecedented pressure on Radio Azattyk and other independent media outlets and stop the practice of arbitrarily blocking websites and freezing bank accounts of news outlets;
5. Notes with concern the restrictions on freedom of assembly, such as the banning of protest in the capital city;
6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, Commission, EU HRVP, EU Special Representative for Central Asia and the President, Government and Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic.