



Plenary sitting

B9-0353/2023

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 ECR 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 Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure,

- A. whereas Kyrgyzstan has traditionally been known as the most open in the region and a degree of media pluralism has been reported in the country, but in the last years democratic standards have clearly deteriorated
- B. whereas a law adopted in 2014 criminalised the publication of “false information relating to a crime or offense” in the media with penalties of up to three years to five years in prison, which is widely abused to the detriment of freedom of speech and expression whereas in 2021, the Kyrgyz parliament passed legislation on “false information”, which human rights activists claim provides a legal censorship outside the courts;
- C. whereas recent government efforts have been reported to crack down on privately owned media outlets in the country, as well as renowned international media such as Radio Free Europe; whereas independent media have been the target of cyber attacks following the publication of articles about corruption; whereas journalists and bloggers have faced interference, intimidation, detention and physical attacks while conducting their work;
- D. whereas Kyrgyz authorities recently tried and failed to convict a prominent investigative journalist, Bolot Temirov, on dubious charges of forgery; whereas in violation of the rule of law, Temirov was summarily stripped of his citizenship and transported to Russia in late November 2022, despite the fact that he had been born in Kyrgyzstan;
- E. whereas recently around one-third of Kyrgyz parliament members supported a draft bill that is modelled on the “foreign agents” Russian legislation to suppress independent media and civil society and that is currently under discussion;
- F. whereas the human rights Ombudswoman, Atyr Abdrakhmatova, was dismissed by the Kyrgyz parliament from her office before she completes her five-year term in connection with her critical annual report on the human rights situation in the country, including media freedom
- G. whereas on 28 March 2023, the European Union’s Special Envoy on EU sanctions called on Kyrgyzstan and other countries in the region to avoid assisting Moscow’s attempts to evade sanctions imposed on Russia over its war of aggression against Ukraine;
- 1. Expresses concern at the backsliding of media freedom and freedom of expression in Kyrgyzstan and acts of violence, intimidation and censorship against journalists and bloggers in the country; calls on the Kyrgyz authorities to respect and uphold fundamental freedoms, notably media freedom and freedom of expression in the country, in line with

the EU-Kyrgyzstan Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and for the benefit of all citizens of Kyrgyzstan;;

2. Urges the Kyrgyz parliament to retract their support from the “foreign agents” proposal; calls on the Kyrgyz government to avoid assisting the Russian Federation in evading sanctions imposed on Russia over its war of aggression against Ukraine;
3. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the VP/HR, the parliaments of the Member States and the Government and Parliament of Kyrgyzstan.