

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1215/07  
by Milan Horáček (Verts/ALE)  
to the Council

Subject: Protest against the closure of the Russian-Chechen Friendship Society

On 3 February 2006, Stanislav Dmitrievsky, the Director of the Russian-Chechen Friendship Society (RCFS), was convicted of alleged incitement to racial hatred for campaigning for an end to the conflict in Chechnya and openly supporting criticism of President Putin. In October 2006, the RCFS, which worked with great commitment to bring an end to the troubling situation, was closed down following the judgment.

The closure is a further sign of growing authoritarianism in Russia and of the misuse of the Russian law on NGOs. Moreover, the trial of Mr Dmitrievsky has parallels with that of Mikhail Khordorkovsky and Platon Lebedev: they are nothing but show trials, in which verdicts are delivered not on a legal but on a political basis, violating fundamental principles of the rule of law.

What steps will the Council take in the context of bilateral relations between the EU and Russia to ensure that the latter adheres to basic principles of the rule of law and human rights?

Will these principles form a decisive part of the new agreement with Russia, so that any infringement of them will lead the EU to take appropriate measures?

Will the Council put pressure on the Russian Government to strengthen the role of civil society instead of stifling it with repressive laws?

Will the Council attempt to persuade Russia to remove the ban on the Russian-Chechen Friendship Society and other NGOs in Russia?