

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Session document

3 July 2002

B5-0407/2002 }
B5-0413/2002 }
B5-0419/2002 }
B5-0426/2002 }
B5-0430/2002 }

RC1

JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 50(5) of the Rules of Procedure by

- Arie M. Oostlander and Bernd Posselt, on behalf of the PPE-DE Group
- Jannis Sakellariou, Jan Marinus Wiersma and Margrietus J. van den Berg, on behalf of the PSE Group
- Ole Andreasen and Astrid Thors, on behalf of the ELDR Group
- Bart Staes, Elisabeth Schroedter, Joost Lagendijk, Claude Turmes and Matti Wuori, on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group
- Pernille Frahm, Herman Schmid and Luisa Morgantini, on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

replacing the motions by the following groups:

- Verts/ALE (B5-0407/2002),
- ELDR (B5-0413/2002),
- PSE (B5-0419/2002),
- PPE-DE (B5-0426/2002),
- GUE/NGL (B5-0430/2002),

on the case of Grigory Pasko

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PE 319.842}
PE 319.849}
PE 319.855}
PE 319.862}
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European Parliament resolution on the case of Grigory Pasko

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Russia, and in particular those dealing with the case of Grigory Pasko,
 - having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Russia which entered into force on 1 December 1997, and in particular to Article 2 thereof,
 - having regard to the Common Strategy of the EU on Russia, adopted by the European Council at Cologne on 4 June 1999,
 - having regard to the fact that Article 47 of the Russian law on the media stipulates that 'any journalist has the right to seek, request, receive and circulate information',
 - having regard to Articles 41 and 42 of the Russian Constitution, pursuant to which the withholding of information regarding the environment or catastrophes which endanger human life is a criminal offence,
- A. whereas the Supreme Court's military division in Moscow upheld the verdict of treason against environmental journalist Grigory Pasko, now serving his sentence in Vladivostok,
- B. whereas, on 25 December 2001, Pasko, a military reporter for the Boyevaya Vakhta newspaper, was convicted of treason in a Pacific Fleet military court and sentenced to four years' imprisonment for attending a meeting of naval brass and possessing notes he made there,
- C. noting that Mr Pasko and his lawyers deny the charges, stressing that the trials were punishment for Mr Pasko's reports on environmental abuses by the Russian navy and that the verdict was passed under overt pressure from the Federal Security Service (FSB) and was based on false evidence fabricated by that agency,
- D. pointing out that the appeal was Pasko's last chance to avoid spending the next four years in one of Russia's work camps for the crime of bringing to light the brewing nuclear disaster represented by the Russian's Navy ageing Pacific fleet and its negligent waste disposal practices,
- E. stressing that, despite the calls by Pasko's legal team for the hearings to be made public, the judge accepted the request of the military prosecutor for the hearings to be held behind closed doors, and some 70 journalists were made to leave the courtroom,
- F. noting that Mr Pasko's lawyer, Anatoly Pyshkin, announced he would appeal to a higher body at the Supreme Court, as well as to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg,

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- G. whereas Gregory Pasko had also written articles on the pollution emitted by badly maintained Russian submarines and the secret services' implication in nuclear waste trafficking,
- H. whereas this sentence has caused widespread indignation all over the world and Amnesty International has adopted Pasko as a prisoner of conscience,
- I. pointing out that this case shows once more that freedom of expression in Russia is deeply undermined and that the situation, with regard also to the independence of the judiciary, should be closely monitored,
- J. stressing that the development of a genuine partnership and the stepping-up of relations with Russia should be linked to clear progress in the field of democracy and human rights,
 - 1. Believes that the case of Grigory Pasko is highly symbolic of the present situation concerning the freedom of speech in Russia and that his conviction is a considerable setback for the development of the rule of law;
 - 2. Calls on the competent Russian authorities to show the necessary flexibility and indulgence and release him immediately, halting further judicial proceedings, and would welcome any positive step by President Putin in this regard;
 - 3. Urges the Council to express the European Union's deepest concern and its sympathy with the imprisoned journalist and to put the item of media freedom at the top of the agenda for the next EU-Russia meetings;
 - 4. Urges its Delegation for relations with Russia to continue to follow further developments closely in Mr Pasko's case and to report back to its Foreign Affairs Committee at an early date;
 - 5. Calls on its colleagues in the Russian State Duma to use their political weight in order to ensure freedom of the press and, in particular, the rights of journalists, so as to guarantee the right to information of the population of their country;
 - 6. Calls on the Commission to ensure, in the context of the TACIS programme, that toxic waste in Russia is disposed of in an environmentally sound way;
 - 7. Urges the Commission, within the TACIS-Democracy framework, to focus more effectively on projects concerning freedom of expression and the independence of the media and the judiciary;
 - 8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the government and the parliament of the Russian Federation.