

## Oleg Sentsov awarded the 2018 Sakharov Prize

**Ukrainian film director Oleg Sentsov has been awarded this year's European Parliament Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought.**

European Parliament President Antonio Tajani announced the laureate in the Strasbourg chamber at noon on Thursday, following an earlier decision by the Conference of Presidents (President and political group leaders).

"Through his courage and determination, by putting his life in danger, the film maker Oleg Sentsov has become a symbol of the struggle for the release of political prisoners held in Russia and around the world. By awarding him the Sakharov Prize, the European Parliament is expressing its solidarity with him and his cause. We ask that he be released immediately. His struggle reminds us that it is our duty to defend human rights everywhere in the world and under all circumstances", said [EP President Tajani](#).

Mr Sentsov is a Ukrainian film director who has been sentenced to 20 years in prison for "plotting terrorist acts" against the Russian "de facto" rule in Crimea. The [two other finalists](#) were 11 non-governmental organisations rescuing migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea and Nasser Zefzafi, leader of the Moroccan mass protest movement, Hirak.

The Sakharov award ceremony will be held in Strasbourg on 12 December.

### Background

The [Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought](#) is awarded each year by the European Parliament. It was set up in 1988 to honour individuals and organisations defending human rights and fundamental freedoms. 2018 marks 30 years since the Sakharov Prize was first conferred.

Last year, the prize was given to the [democratic opposition in Venezuela](#). It is named in honour of Soviet physicist and political dissident Andrei Sakharov.

## Further information

Headlines: Sakharov Prize 2018

Statement by AFET Chair David McAllister on the three finalists for the 2018 Sakharov Prize  
The Sakharov Prize Network (SPN)

Announcement of the Sakharov Prize winner 2018 - extracts from the statement by the  
President (25.10.2018)

Multimedia package: Sakharov Prize 2018

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