

Resolution on Russia, in particular the cases of Eston Kohver, Oleg Sentsov and Olexandr Kolchenko

2015/2838(RSP) - 10/09/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 378 votes to 111 with 138 abstentions, a resolution on Russia, in particular the cases of Eston Kohver, Oleg Sentsov and Olexandr Kolchenko.

The resolution was tabled by the EPP, S&D, ECR, ALDE and Greens/EFA groups.

Members strongly condemned the judgment handed down by the Pskov regional court as well as the entire trial of Estonian police officer Eston Kohver, who was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment after his abduction in 2014 from the territory of Estonia, which was part of the EU and subsequently illegally detained in Russia. They considered the case to be in breach of international law and urge the Russian Federation to release Eston Kohver immediately and to guarantee his safe return to Estonia.

Parliament also strongly condemned the illegal sentencing and imprisonment of Oleg Sentsov and Olexandr Kolchenko, two activists opposing the illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by Russia, who were arrested and tortured. It called on the Russian Federation to release them immediately and guarantee their safe return to Ukraine.

Members deplored the fact that in the Russian Federation law and justice were being used as political instruments in breach of international law and standards, thus allowing the sentencing of the Ukrainian film-maker Oleg Sentsov and of Olexandr Kolchenko to 20 years and 10 years imprisonment respectively for expressing their views.

Furthermore, Parliament emphasised that Russian courts were not competent to judge acts committed outside the internationally recognised territory of Russia, and pointed out that the judicial proceedings in all three cases should not be regarded as legitimate.

The Council and the Commission were asked to address these cases in their contacts with the Russian authorities and to report back to Parliament. Members called on Member States to do the same in bilateral meetings.

For its part, Russia was asked to comply with international legal obligations and with the law, without any political interference.

Members called on the Council to establish a common EU list of the officials responsible for the abduction, illegal detention and sentencing of Eston Kohver, Nadiya Savchenko, Oleg Sentsov and Olexandr Kolchenko, to impose and implement a EU-wide visa ban on these officials.

Lastly, they urged the President of the European Council and the VP/HR to come up with a comprehensive policy strategy, which would enable the EU to regain the initiative and to pursue a more clear-cut policy towards Russia.