Resolution on the rule of law in Russia

2013/2667(RSP) - 13/06/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the rule of law in Russia. The resolution was tabled by the S&D, Greens/EFA, ALDE, ECR, GUE/NGL, and EPP groups.

It expresses serious concerns about the **recent repressive laws and their arbitrary enforcement** by the Russian authorities, and is deeply worried by Russia's failure to observe its international legal obligations to protect freedom of association, expression and assembly, which is **posing a threat** to both the viability of Russia's vibrant civil society and its cooperation with the EU. Members refer to several trials over the last few years, such as the **Magnitsky, Khodorkovsky and Politkovskaya cases**, which have cast doubt on the independence of the judicial institutions of the Russian Federation. They also refer to current trial of **Alexei Navalny** who has consistently exposed massive corruption within the highest levels of the Russian state apparatus, and deplore the allegedly politically motivated nature of his prosecution.

Members also reaffirm their disappointment with the **bill granting 'foreign agent' status** to Russian non-commercial organisations engaged in political activities and financed from abroad. Parliament urges the Russian authorities to **stop registering NGOs as 'foreign agents'** on the basis of a law, which extended state control over NGOs, using the vague definition of political activities included in this law. Furthermore, it is deeply concerned at the negative consequences of the adoption of a **federal law on 'homosexual propaganda'**, which could increase discrimination and violence against LGBTI individuals.

The resolution urges the Vice-President / High Representative, the EEAS, the Council and the Commission to:

- continue to closely follow the above-mentioned cases, to raise these issues in different formats and meetings with Russia and to report back to Parliament on their exchanges with the Russian authorities;

- take into account, during the current negotiations on the next **multiannual financial framework** and during the programming phase, the deteriorating situation for civil society, the forced withdrawal of other international donors and the increasing requests for EU support, and to provide for a **significant increase** in the Union's financial support to NGOs and civil society accordingly;

- implement an **EU-wide visa ban and to freeze the financial assets** in the EU of all officials involved in the death of Magnitsky, which is being prosecuted posthumously, and of other serious human rights violators in Russia.

The Council is asked to adopt the **EU Foreign Affairs Council's conclusions on human rights in Russia,** which would serve to provide critical support to all those in Russia working to protect human rights and also to bind the 27 EU Member States and EU institutions to a common message and approach with regards to human rights in Russia.

Parliament asks Russia:

- with regard to the 'March of Millions', to commission an independent inquiry into the Bolotnaya Square violence and, in particular, to investigate allegations of excessive use of force against demonstrators;

- to ensure freedom of the press and media, both online and offline, and to foster a pluralist media landscape;

- to accept recommendations, made in the context of the Universal Periodic Review of Russia at the Human Rights Council, to repeal legislation affecting the work of NGOs and to stop obstructing human rights work.

Lastly, Parliament welcomes the recent re-opening of proceedings in the case of the murder of Anna Politkovskaya, but shares the concern that the question of who ordered the murder is unlikely to emerge from the case.