Resolution on the follow-up to the Sakharov Prize

2006/2683(RSP) - 14/12/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the follow-up to the Sakharov Prize.

The resolution was tabled by the EPP-ED, PES, ALDE, Greens/EFA, GUE/NGL and UEN groups.

The Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought was established in 1988. It is one of the many ways in which the European Parliament supports human rights and the cause of democracy and is a means of acknowledging the contribution of those who fight oppression, intolerance and injustice in the world.

The 1990 prize winner, the Burmese dissident Aung San Suu Kyi, who is under house arrest, and the 2005 prize winner, the Cuban collective Damas de Blanco, have not yet been authorised to come to receive the prize. Therefore, the Conference of Presidents decided to dispatch two delegations to Cuba and Burma to establish contact with the prize winners in order to check on their personal situation. Moreover, the winner of the 1996 Sakharov Prize - Wei Jingsheng, who was still imprisoned at the time - has not yet had the opportunity to address the Plenary and receive the reward linked to the prize.

The resolution deplores the fact that some prize winners have still not been authorised to receive their prize in person, which represents a violation of one of the fundamental rights of each human being, namely the freedom to enter and leave one's own country without hindrance, a right which is specifically recognised by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Parliament welcomes the decision taken by the Conference of Presidents to establish a follow-up mechanism for winners of the Sakharov Prize and systematically to dispatch a European Parliament delegation to meet those prize winners who have not been authorised by the authorities of their countries to attend the prize-giving ceremony. In this context, the authorities of the countries concerned are called upon to facilitate the delegations' journeys.

MEPs reiterate their demand that all winners of the Sakharov Prize be given access to the European institutions. The Parliament calls upon its President to take all the necessary steps in order to enable these decisions to be implemented.

The Parliament also calls upon the Conference of Presidents to enter on the agenda for its next meeting the organisation of a ceremony to award the Sakharov Prize to Wei Jingsheng.