Resolution on the attack on Galina Kozlova

2007/2528(RSP) - 15/03/2007 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution strongly condemning the attack on Galina Kozlova, a member of the board of the Mari national organisation Mari Ušem. This attack had so far not led to any convictions or even arrests, and Parliament condemened the continuing harassment of, and assaults on, activists, leading cultural figures and independent journalists in Mari El. It called on the federal and local authorities to bring the perpetrators of these acts to justice and ensure respect for freedom of expression.

To recall, Galina Kozlova, was also the editor of the literary magazine Ontšõko and wife of Vladimir Kozlov, chair of the Mari council. She was brutally attacked on 25 January 2007 and suffered head injuries resulting in concussion and severe headaches, dizziness and eyesight problems. According to Mari Ušem, the attack could not have been an ordinary robbery attempt. The attack on Mrs Kozlova followed a series of attacks on activists and journalists in Mari El, including the killing of three journalists in 2001, an attack on Vladimir Kozlov on 4 February 2005 and an attack on the former leader of the Mari movement, Nina Maksimova.

Parliament pointed out that individuals belonging to the Mari minority faced considerable difficulty in obtaining education in their native language, since there was no secondary or higher education in the Mari language. It was convinced that the multi-ethnic character of the Russian Federation greatly contributed to the cultural and linguistic diversity of Europe and was a phenomenon of which all citizens of the Russian Federation were justifiably proud and which should be preserved for the benefit of all Europeans. It called for a speedy, comprehensive and independent inquiry by federal and local judicial authorities into the attacks on Mrs Kozlova and other similar incidents. The Government of Mari El must immediately halt political retribution and intimidation directed at dissenting public servants and refrain from undue political interference in the affairs of educational and cultural institutions.

Parliament went on to call on the authorities to honour their obligations under international law and take adequate steps to facilitate the practical implementation of the provisions of the Constitution and legislation relating to the maintenance of minority languages and cultures, with particular emphasis on providing quality education in a person's native language at all levels. This must ensure that the Mari language and Russian are placed on the same footing throughout Mari El.

The Commission was asked to raise the issue of Finno-Ugric minorities in Russia, and concerns regarding the situation in Mari El, during the regular EU-Russia human rights dialogue and at the forthcoming EU-Russia Summit.