

Freedom for Political Prisoners in Russia

The Congress of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) Party, convening in Estoril, Portugal on October 4-6, 2024:

Notes with concern:

- The Russia Report to the UN Human Rights Council in September detailing ongoing repression and human rights violations under Putin's regime in Russia;
- Reports from Human Rights Group Memorial, Antiwar Committee and OVD-Info, indicating over 1000 political opponents of Putin's regime are currently imprisoned, some, like Alexei Navalny or pianist Pavel Kushnir, already dead, others left with little medical help or tortured;
- Russian citizens are victims of a systematic effort to eliminate dissent and calls for peace, through repression, beatings, imprisonment, torture, and death;
- Arbitrary labelling individuals and legal entities "foreign agents" "extremists" or "terrorists" represents an extra method of repression on politicians, journalists, LGBTI+ citizens and NGOs;
- Thus, Vasily Neustroyev, 29, a historian, election observer, and Yabloko member, is charged under six criminal articles, facing 15 years of imprisonment.

Believes:

- International support for Russian political prisoners and broad media coverage of these cases is urgently needed to raise awareness;
- The plight of thousands of Ukrainian political prisoners, many of whom face lengthy sentences, transferred to penal colonies without knowledge of their whereabouts, demands immediate attention.

Welcomes:

- Efforts of Yabloko party and Russian citizens supporting political prisoners through legal aid and crowdfunding, and calls for peace, despite significant risks;
- Sending letters of solidarity to prisoners - a lifeline to monitor their situation, and foster hope;
- Recent release of 16 prisoners, including Vladimir Kara-Murza and Ilya Yashin, as a positive step, though many unjustly remain in custody.

Calls for:

- Immediate release of all political prisoners in Russia, particularly those opposing the war in Ukraine and Putin's authoritarian rule;
- ALDE member parties to reaffirm our commitment to a democratic Russia and our support for those who fight for freedom and human rights including efforts against disinformation in Europe;
- EU governments and the EU to prioritise human rights when engaging with Russian authorities and advocate for the immediate release all political prisoners.