

Freedom to Russian political prisoners

The Council of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) Party convening in Bratislava, Slovakia, on 2-3 December 2022:

Notes that:

- persecution, intimidation and repression against the dissenting – politicians, activists, human rights activists, journalists, bloggers and nonpartisan citizens publicly opposing and criticising the policies of the government, especially the war in Ukraine and the so-called partial mobilisation – have got mass-scale; huge fines for exercising free speech have become daily practices of the authorities; many of the dissenting were ousted out of the country and many are under arrest;
- criminal prosecution of the dissent has soared: dozens of politicians and activists have received long imprisonment terms, many are still in custody undergoing trials and facing up to twenty years in prison, such as imprisoned opposition journalist and politician Vladimir Kara-Murza, Prize winner of the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize and laureate of the award for courage of the Axel Springer Stiftung Award, facing a 24 year sentence, charged with high treason in October 2022 in addition to the initial charges of spreading “fakes about the Russian army” brought against him in April;
- members the Yabloko party, ALDE full member, have been continuously facing threats and reprisals, subjected to fines, arrests, and ban on participation in elections for their calls to stop the war against Ukraine; criminal prosecution against three members of Yabloko is still underway: journalist Mikhail Afanasyev kept in custody since April got prolongation of arrest in November, Anatoly Nogovitsin had to fight against an attempt of the authorities to use punitive psychiatry against him, and the case against journalist Vladimir Yefimov develops even after police had to release him.

Calls on the ALDE Party and its member parties, the European Parliament, the European Commission, and EU Member States to demand from the Russian Federation to:

- stop persecution and repression against all the dissenting;
- abolish all laws that unreasonably limit the freedom of speech and press, including those that penalise opposing the Russian war against Ukraine;
- release all political prisoners and abolish all the criminal and administrative cases against the dissenting;
- immediately release Vladimir Kara-Murza and waive all the charges against him;

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- stop reprisals against Yabloko and prosecution of its activists;
- stop intimidation and torture in the detention facilities and prisons.

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