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## **Nobel Prize: Von der Leyen (EU), “recognized the courage of those standing against autocracy”**

The winners of the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize are Belarusian activist Ales Bialiatski, founder of the human rights organisation “Spring”, the Russian NGO Memorial, and the Ukrainian Centre for Civil Liberties, because they “represent civil society in their home countries”, the Norwegian Committee explained in a statement. “They have for many years promoted the right to criticise power and protect the fundamental rights of citizens”, the statement goes on to read, and “they have made an outstanding effort to document war crimes, human right abuses and the abuse of power. Together they demonstrate the significance of civil society for peace and democracy”. Bialiatski has been in prison since August 2021. Memorial was forcibly liquidated in late 2021 and is now facing trial in Russia. The Nobel Prize Committee “has recognized the outstanding courage of the women and men standing against autocracy”, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said in a tweet. “They show the true power of civil society in the fight for democracy”. European Council President Charles Michel, too, congratulated the winners, calling the 2022 Prize “a beacon of light and a symbol of peace between nations”. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Nada Nashif, stressed: “This prize reminds us of the courageous and essential work of all human rights defenders. We should do more to honour their work and protect them”.

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