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## **EU Parliament: Russia must immediately release political prisoners Kara-Murza and Navalny**

The European Parliament “strongly condemns politically motivated” convictions and urges “EU countries to provide humanitarian visas and other support to Russian dissidents at risk of political prosecution”. Following the recent sentencing of Russian-British journalist Vladimir Kara-Murza to 25 years in prison for having criticised Vladimir Putin’s regime, MEPs strongly condemn “this politically motivated conviction” and demand the “immediate and unconditional release” of the dissident. Furthermore, they make the same demand for Russian opposition activist and 2021 Sakharov Prize laureate Alexei Navalny, who is still detained in a penal colony, as well as for all other political prisoners in Russia. The non-legislative resolution was adopted by 508 votes in favour, 14 against and 31 abstentions. “While noting that the health of both Mr Kara-Murza and Mr Navalny is rapidly deteriorating due to mistreatment and lack of proper medical care”, MEPs denounce “the escalation of human rights violations by the Russian regime” and condemn “the ongoing crackdown on government critics, human rights defenders and independent journalists in the country”. For this reason, they call on the UN Human Rights Council to “conduct an immediate investigation into the acts of inhuman imprisonment, torture and murder of political opponents in Russia”. MEPs call on EU countries in the Council to adopt tough sanctions against “Russian judges, prosecutors and others responsible for the arbitrary prosecutions, detentions and torture in politically motivated trials”.

Valentina Bombelli