



Press release 13 July 2006

Over 100 Members of the European Parliament urge President Putin to give Mikhail Khodorkovsky a fair trial

Hans-Gert Poettering MEP, Chairman of the European People's Party and European Democrats, Elmar Brok MEP, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee and Camiel Eurlings MEP, Chairman of the Delegation to the EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee – as well as three Vice-Presidents and 100 other Members of the European Parliament representing 23 Member States and 5 political groups - have co-signed a public letter to President Putin.

The letter strongly voices their concerns on the treatment of Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the former CEO of Yukos, who is serving an 8-year prison sentence in Siberia. The letter is timed to coincide with the start of the G8 summit in St. Petersburg and has been sent in copy to all the leaders of the G8 and the President of the European Commission.

The letter states: “We believe that Mikhail Khodorkovsky is a political prisoner of the Russian Federation. His trial represented a travesty of justice and he has suffered constant human rights abuses during his arrest, trial and imprisonment, including the fact that he is being held, contrary to Russian law, far removed from his family in a prison camp in Krasnokamensk, Siberia...

The chairing of the G8 summit in St. Petersburg represents an important opportunity for Russia that should not be marred by the brutal treatment that has been afforded Mikhail Khodorkovsky. We urge you, in conformity with Russian law, to return him to a prison near Moscow and to ensure that he is swiftly given a fair trial.”

Vytautas Landsbergis MEP, former Head of State of Lithuania and one of the organisers of the letter, commented:

“I fear for the life of Mikhail Khodorkovsky. He is the political adversary of President Putin who now holds personal responsibility for the prisoner's survival. It is time for the vindictive and politically motivated treatment of Mikhail Khodorkovsky to stop. The continued psychological torturing of Mikhail Khodorkovsky during his mock trial and extremely harsh imprisonment - which aims to break him spiritually - must also cease at once. President Putin, as the guarantor of the Russian Constitution, should immediately, in accordance with Russian law, ensure he is transferred to a prison in the Moscow region and finally given a fair trial.”

ENDS

Attachment: Letter

For further information please contact:

Venantas Griciunas

Parliamentary Assistant to Vytautas Landsbergis MEP

Email: vlandsbergis-a@europarl.europa.eu

Tel: + 32 (2) 284 7550