



Members of PACE addressed Interpol to stop political persecution of Russian, Kazakh, Moldovan and Azerbaijani dissidents and activists

On 27 June, 2017, Members of PACE from across the political spectrum and different states: **Mr Frank Schwabe** (Germany; SOC), **Mr Yves Cruchten** (Luxembourg; SOC), **Mr Ertuğrul Kürkçü** (Turkey; UEL), **Mr Nikolaj Villumsen** (Denmark; UEL), **Mrs Nellija Kleinberga** (Latvia; ALDE), **Mr Henk Overbeek** (Netherlands; UEL), and **Mr Emanuelis Zingeris** (Lithuania; EPP/CD) addressed the Secretary of Interpol, **Mr Jürgen Stock**, and the **Commission for the Control of Interpol's Files** (CCF) in a joint letter concerning the widespread abuses of Interpol system by Russia, Kazakhstan, Moldova and Azerbaijan. They expressed their concerns about the warrants placed on innocent citizens of those states. Russia put **Mr Yan Andreev**, former head of the Tutaev district of the Yaroslavl region (Russia), on the list after he refused to step down from his office because non-affiliated to the party 'United Russia'. The Kazakh authorities issued warrants for the **Khrapunov family** and **Mr Anatoliy Pogorelov** in an attempt to obtain testimonies incriminating **Mr Mukhtar Ablyazov**, within the context of the BTA Bank case. Similarly, the authorities in Azerbaijan put **Mr Ferid Yusub**'s name on the wanted list after a conflict with one of the Ministry of Internal Affairs officials.

While the Members of PACE praised the reforms introduced by Interpol, they noted that the attempts to address unfair prosecution and detention should be a continuous effort, and thus perhaps the development of effective preventive mechanisms is necessary. The abuses of Interpol system not only interfere with the enjoyment of human rights by individuals, but also make the agency's efforts to combat and detain actual criminals considerably less effective. In their letter, the PACE Members also directed attention of Interpol to the cases of **Mr Pogorelov** and **Mr Yusub**, who are currently residing in unsafe states and do not benefit from full human rights protection - and therefore are in placed an extremely vulnerable position.

Another issue discussed in the letter was the future of Interpol warrant system, and particularly how it should be utilised in the forthcoming cases. The Members of PACE recognized that the authoritarian states will not be eager to dismiss the political advantages that come with the wanted list. Therefore, they attempted to bring Interpol's attention to a number of cases of political activists who may be placed on the list in the future - including the Moldovan citizens and activists **Mrs Ana Ursachi** and **Mr Alexandru Machedon**, as well as the Azerbaijani human rights defenders **Mrs Leyla** and **Mr Arif Yunus**. This is expected to provide Interpol with the insights necessary to counteract similar abuses of the system.

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