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## PRESS STATEMENT

<b>Regarding</b>	The European Parliament urges Russia to release Ukrainian political prisoners
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### The European Parliament urges Russia to release Ukrainian political prisoners

MEPs today adopted a human rights resolution, calling on the Russian government to immediately and unconditionally release dozens of Ukrainian political prisoners, who have been illegally detained and imprisoned in Russia and occupied Crimea.

The resolution also calls on Russian authorities to allow prisoners access to medical and legal services, guarantee humane conditions, and investigate reports of torture.

The European Parliament has once again reaffirmed its commitments to Ukraine's territorial integrity and a peaceful resolution of the conflict there.

Julie Ward worked with fellow MEPs to promote and draft the resolution which highlights the case of Ukrainian film-maker [Oleg Sentsov](#) currently imprisoned in Siberia and serving 20 years for supposed acts of 'terrorism'.

Julie has joined with international celebrities such as Johnny Depp to support 'Let My People Go' <http://letmypeplego.org.ua> an international campaign to release Sentsov and other Ukrainian hostages of the Kremlin. She recently co-hosted an event in the European Parliament with the Open Dialogue Foundation <http://en.odfoundation.eu> highlighting the case of imprisoned Ukrainians. This included a screening of one of Sentsov's films, Gamer.

In October 2016 Julie participated in a [live streamed event](#) with [Belarus Free Theatre](#) and exiled Ukrainian arts activists as part of a post-show discussion following a performance of 'Burning Doors', a production exploring the Russian state's suppression of artistic freedom.

Julie Ward MEP said:

"The Russian government must immediately release all these prisoners it holds illegally. It must investigate reports of torture, and give reparations to victims.

I would like to thank Open Dialogue Foundation for all the work they continue to do to expose the Russian state's systematic abuse of human rights.

The EU and the European Parliament must continue to support the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, and stand by the Ukrainian people in these tough times. I would especially like to raise the case of Ukrainian film-maker Oleg Sentsov who was a rising star in the international film scene before his unlawful arrest.

True and meaningful peace can only come about through intercultural dialogue and cultural diplomacy, and this is why artists, creators and civil society groups have such an important role to play in developing better democracies.”