

Mr Laurent Fabius, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of France
Ministère des Affaires étrangères et du Développement international
37, Quai d'Orsay
75700 Paris 07SP

Strasbourg, 11 March 2015

Dear Minister,

As Members of the European Parliament and as social democrats, we would like to express our deep concern over the fate of Mr Mukhtar Ablyazov, Kazakh dissident and one of main political opponents to the President of Kazakhstan, Mr Nursultan Nazarbayev.

On March 4th, the French Supreme Court rejected the final appeal of Mr Ablyazov, which confirms the decision of extradition by the Court of Appeal of Lyon allowing his extradition to Russia or Ukraine. Mr Ablyazov, a person involved in creating and financing the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan political opposition party and other democratically oriented opposition in Kazakhstan, faces a risk of extradition from France to Russia or to Ukraine. As transpires from the political activity of Mr Ablyazov, and information published by international media outlets, it would seem that those truly behind his search are the authorities of Kazakhstan.

Following threats, Mr Ablyazov, fearing for his and his family members' lives, had to flee Kazakhstan in 2009. He was since granted a political asylum in the United Kingdom in 2011. In July 2013 Mr Ablyazov was arrested in France on the basis of requests issued to the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) by Russia and Ukraine.

Both Russia and the former government of Ukraine have used suspicions of a massive financial embezzlement as a motive to accuse Mr Ablyazov. The accusations of financial crimes are often used as a tool by such corrupt governments for persecution of opposition, previously for instance in the case of Mikhail Khodorkovsky.

As the judicial proceedings are now in their final stage and the question of extradition hangs on a political decision, we have decided to approach you. In our opinion, Russia and Ukraine cannot be treated as full guarantees of Mr Ablyazov's safety. We regret that Mr Ablyazov, a democratic political leader with political asylum in another EU Member State, faces possible extradition to countries where he most probably could not be assured an independent trial, avoid ill treatment and refoulement to Kazakhstan. Both countries are struggling with their internal problems. The security situation in Ukraine does not enable its government to provide Mr Ablyazov full protection against risks prevailing on its territory. The recent assassination of another political leader, Mr Boris Nemtsov, in Moscow, shows a deteriorating trend in the respect for civil and political rights in Russia.

We would therefore request your utmost attention to this case, in the hope that the French authorities will decide to grant protection to Mr Ablyazov and thereby join other European and EU Member States, such as Austria, the Czech Republic, Italy, Poland, Spain,

Switzerland and the United Kingdom, which have already given international protection to family members and other dissidents related to Mr Ablyazov.

Sincerely yours,

Maurice	MARSH LAURISTIN
Ana Gomes	ANA GOMES
Julie Ward	Julie Ward
Kati Piri	Kati Piri
Tonino Picola	TONINO PICOLA
Liisa Jaakonson	LIISA JAAKONSON
TANJA FAJON	Tanja Fajon
JOSEF WEIDENHOFER	Josef Weidenhofer
Christine REVAULT RALLON VESSEY NEROL	Christine Revaux
SORAYA FOST	Soraya Fost
Juan F Lopez Aguilera	Juan F Lopez Aguilera
Elena	Elena MENCIANO
JANUZZI ZEMME	Januzzi

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