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The publication of CPT's reports

Written question No. 579 to the Committee of Ministers
by Ms Chiora TAKTAKISHVILI, Georgia, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe

In November 2009, Mr Sergey Magnitsky died in a remand prison in Moscow. Mr Magnitsky was a lawyer who had defended Hermitage Investment/HSBC against fraudulent manoeuvres allegedly involving high-level Russian officials, as described in the report adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly in October 2009. Mrs Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger, former Assembly rapporteur on "politically-motivated abuses of the criminal justice system in the Council of Europe member states" and current Minister of Justice of Germany called on 19 November for clarity over the death in prison of this Russian lawyer.

Subsequent to this tragic event, the President of Russia, Dmitri Medvedev ordered an investigation into the case. This interest shown by the highest Russian official was welcomed by a number of Council of Europe personalities. However, until today the Russian Federation remains the only party to the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which continuously refrains from making public the country reports prepared by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT). The Russian Federation ratified the Council of Europe Convention in 1998 and, out of almost 17 CPT reports on the visits to the Russian Federation, only one report on the visit that took place in 2001 became public in 2003.

Mrs Taktakishvili,

To ask the Committee of Ministers,

1. As the CPT remains the main structure of the Council of Europe, providing non-judicial preventive machinery to protect detainees, does the Committee of Ministers agree with the importance of the publication of CPT's reports?
2. How does it assess the continuous practice by one member state of the Organisation not to make public the country reports adopted by the CPT?
3. What steps has the Committee of Ministers taken and/or does it intend to take to convince the Russian authorities of the need to publish CPT's reports on the Russian Federation?