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23 June 2016

Defend the freedom of Ruslan Kotsaba imprisoned in Ukraine

Written declaration No. 609

This written declaration does not reflect the position of the Assembly; only of those members that have signed it. It will not be considered further by the Assembly.

In January 2015, the journalist Ruslan Kotsaba published a video message to Ukrainian President Poroschenko demanding a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Ukraine and negotiations with all parties involved. He declared that he would refuse military service and called for the boycott of the mobilisation.

On 12 May 2016, the journalist and conscientious objector Kotsaba was sentenced to three and a half years imprisonment for obstructing the activities of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Already in spring 2015 Mr Kotsaba was declared a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International because his prosecution is a violation of the freedom of expression. Likewise, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Ukrainian Parliament, Lutkovska Valeriia Volodymyrivna, criticised the judgment as a violation of the freedom of expression as guaranteed in Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

We, the undersigned, resolutely condemn the violations of the freedom of expression of Article 10 ECHR and the freedom of thought, conscience and religion of Article 9 ECHR safeguarding also the right to conscientious objection. We call for the immediate release of Ruslan Kotsaba, his recognition as a conscientious objector and the repeal of the judgment.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

HUNKO Andrej, Germany, UEL
BILDARRATZ Jokin, Spain, ALDE
CHRISTODOULOPOULOU Anastasia, Greece, UEL
ELZINGA Tuur, Netherlands, UEL
GROTH Annette, Germany, UEL
HANŽEK Matjaž, Slovenia, UEL
JOHNSON FORNARVE Lotta, Sweden, UEL
JÓNASSON Ögmundur, Iceland, UEL
KASIMATI Nina, Greece, UEL
KAVVADIA Ioanneta, Greece, UEL
KERESTECİOĞLU DEMİR Filiz, Turkey, UEL
KOX Tiny, Netherlands, UEL
KÜRKÇÜ Ertuğrul, Turkey, UEL
KYRITSIS Georgios, Greece, UEL
LOUCAIDES George, Cyprus, UEL
MAURY PASQUIER Liliane, Switzerland, SOC
NORDQVIST Rasmus, Denmark, UEL
ÖZSOY Hışyar, Turkey, UEL
PSYCHOGIOS Georgios, Greece, UEL
RODRIGUES António Filipe, Portugal, UEL
VILLUMSEN Nikolaj, Denmark, UEL

Total = 21

1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
SOC: Socialist Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left