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Magnitsky case: Switzerland should not release suspect funds prematurely

Written declaration No. 715

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.

We, the undersigned, declare the following:

The Parliamentary Assembly has repeatedly flagged the failure of the Russian authorities to investigate the death of whistle-blower Sergei Magnitsky and the whereabouts of the proceeds of the massive tax reimbursement fraud disclosed by him. Some US \$20 million were tracked to Switzerland and were frozen in 2011, pending further investigations.

These investigations were effectively stalled for many years. Recent reports about the close relationship between top Swiss prosecution officials and the Russian Prosecutor General's office leading to the departure of the Swiss Attorney General go a long way towards explaining why so little progress was made. Surprisingly, therefore, the Swiss prosecution service has recently indicated that it is planning to release the bulk of the frozen suspect funds.

We consider that this would send the wrong signal to the perpetrators and organisers of the crime against Sergei Magnitsky and to the beneficiaries of the crime disclosed by him. We therefore call on the Swiss authorities to fully investigate the origins of the funds in question, using all resources available for international co-operation and to refrain from releasing any suspect funds before all possibilities are exhausted.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

ZINGERIS Emanuelis, Lithuania, EPP/CD
ÅBERG Borianana, Sweden, EPP/CD
ARENT Iwona, Poland, EC/DA
BUTKEVIČIUS Algirdas, Lithuania, SOC
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Total = 23

1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EC/DA: European Conservatives Group and Democratic Alliance
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group