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TEXTS ADOPTED

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**P9\_TA(2023)0290**

**Crackdown on the media and freedom of expression in Kyrgyzstan**

**European Parliament resolution of 13 July 2023 on the crackdown on the media and freedom of expression in Kyrgyzstan (2023/2782(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Kyrgyzstan,
- having regard to Rules 144(5) and 132(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas since gaining independence in 1991, Kyrgyzstan has been regarded as the most democratic of the Central Asian nations, with a vibrant civil society and free media;
- B. whereas in recent years, democratic standards and human rights in Kyrgyzstan have deteriorated alarmingly; whereas the 2023 Reporters Without Borders Index indicates that the country has dropped 50 places to 122 out of 180 countries;
- C. whereas a number of laws are being used to crackdown on independent media and free expression; whereas Radio Azattyk was forced to close, Kaktus Media is facing criminal investigation, investigative journalist Bolot Temirov was illegally expelled to Russia and Next TV director Taalaibek Duishenbiev was unjustly sentenced for covering Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine;
- D. whereas in February 2023, Kyrgyzstan became a member of the UN Human Rights Council;
  1. Calls on the Kyrgyz authorities to respect and uphold fundamental freedoms, in particular media freedom and freedom of expression, in line with the EU-Kyrgyzstan Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement;
  2. Calls on the Kyrgyz authorities and members of Parliament to revoke and withdraw the controversial law on 'false information' and to review the draft laws on 'foreign representatives', 'mass media' and 'protecting children from harmful information', the so-called 'LGBTI propaganda law', which are inconsistent with Kyrgyzstan's international commitments;
  3. Calls on the Kyrgyz authorities to immediately release all arbitrarily detained human rights defenders, media workers and journalists; urges the authorities, in this regard, to drop all charges against Bolot Temirov and Taalaibek Duishenbiev; similarly, calls for

all charges to be dropped against all human rights defenders, including Gulnara Dzhurabayeva, Klara Sooronkulova, Rita Karasartova and Asya Sasykbayeva who have called for transparency on the government's decision to transfer the Kempir-Abad reservoir to Uzbekistan;

4. Urges the authorities to stop putting Radio Azattyk and other media outlets under unprecedented pressure and to ensure a safe working environment for civil society organisations, journalists and media workers;
5. Regrets the recent early dismissal of Ombudswoman Atyr Abdrakhmatova; considers it to be of critical importance for the country to fully respect the Paris Principles on standards for National Human Rights Institutions;
6. Calls for the EU institutions, in particular the EU Delegation in Kyrgyzstan, to continue expressing their grave concern over the deterioration of human rights in the country in all their exchanges with the Kyrgyz authorities;
7. Calls on the Commission to reassess the Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus benefits to the country, given Kyrgyzstan's commitments under international conventions;
8. Calls on the Kyrgyz Government to refrain from circumventing the sanctions that the EU has imposed on Russia for its war of aggression against Ukraine;
9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EU Special Representative for Central Asia, the Member States, the UN Human Rights Council and the Kyrgyz authorities.