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6. Calls upon the Russian authorities to grant the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights, the UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Executions, and the UN Special Rapporteur on Children in Armed Conflict permission to visit Chechnya and neighbouring provinces and to report to the next session of the UN Commission on Human Rights;
7. Calls on the Commission to undertake all preparations necessary for a prompt and efficient deployment of humanitarian aid in the region as soon as full access to humanitarian organisations is granted and to keep the Parliament duly informed;
8. Decides to create an ad hoc delegation of five members to visit the North Caucasus region, to discuss with the Russian authorities and Chechen representatives all issues related to the current conflict as contained in this and previous resolutions;
9. Welcomes the recent visit by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to Chechnya and invites the Parliamentary Assemblies of the Council of Europe and the OSCE to undertake, together with the European Parliament, a troika initiative along the lines of the Belarus troika, in order to
 - (i) contribute to the alleviation of the humanitarian crisis linked to the Chechen crisis;
 - (ii) make clear that our humanitarian standards are shared ones, to be respected by members of any of the three organisations;
 - (iii) contribute to the clarification of allegations over war crimes committed in Chechnya;
10. Recalls that only a political solution to the conflict and the urgent reconstruction of the destroyed region, for which Russia is primarily responsible, can avoid a further escalation of the brutalities and confrontations;
11. Calls on the Chechen authorities to take all measures in their power to locate and release all civilian hostages kidnapped before and during the current conflict in Chechnya and to launch a special investigation into the case of Russian news agency ITAR-TASS photo journalist Vladimir Yatsina, kidnapped in Ingushetia by a Chechen group on 19 July 1999 and missing since then;
12. Urges the Russian authorities to ensure that Russian and international journalists in the region can work without constraint, as well as to provide a full account of what happened to Russian journalist Andrei Babitsky and why he has been forbidden to leave Russia and to attend a working group meeting of the PPE-DE Group during the European Parliament's March part-session in Strasbourg;
13. Invites Mr Kalamonov, as Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation in charge of Human Rights in Chechnya, and the respective representative of the Duma to report to Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy;
14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the parliaments of the Member States, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Russian State Duma and Federal Council, the Government of the Russian Federation and the Chechen authorities.

13. Human rights: Freedom of the press in Serbia

B5-0257, 0266, 0273 and 0281/2000

European Parliament resolution on freedom of the press in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Serbia, especially on restrictions to the freedom of press,
- having regard to the declaration of 3 March 2000 by the Council Presidency on the continued violation of the right to freedom of speech in Serbia and the recent case of Dušan Mihajlovic,

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- recalling the Communication of the Commission on the Balkan Stability Pact,
- A. extremely concerned by the situation of the independent media in Serbia following the entry into force of the Public Information Act, which has given the authorities the legal right to silence press criticism of the current regime, to exert financial pressure on the media, including excessive taxes and licensing fees, and to censor independent journalists,
 - B. deeply concerned by ever growing pressure on the independent media, such as the attacks against Studio B, where the whole studio was destroyed, staff beaten and equipment stolen, or subjecting the independent media to high fines,
 - C. worried about the closing of Radio Boom 93 in Pozarevac and TV Pozega, as well as the banning of Radio Tir and TV Nemanja in Cuprija on 11 March 2000,
 - D. whereas the future of the Balkan Stability Pact is closely tied up with the restoration of the rule of law in Serbia,
 - E. deeply alarmed by the threats and intimidation of some Serbian authorities who have announced that the state would use all means at its disposal to eradicate independent journalists,
 - F. concerned about the growing control of communication channels such as the telephone, e-mail and postal services by the Serbian authorities,
1. Condemns the attacks on the Serbian independent media and expresses its support for all the journalists who have suffered such attacks;
 2. Reiterates its fundamental belief that the exercise of freedom of expression is one of the cornerstones of democracy and that the Serbian people should be allowed to express their political views freely;
 3. Calls on the Commission, in consultation with Studio B and other broadcasting stations concerned, to provide new equipment;
 4. Urges the Council and the Commission to set up a special line for the creation and the support of network of independent media operations in the region under the future CASA programme for south-eastern European countries;
 5. Calls on the Commission to support independent stations broadcasting to Serbia from Montenegro and other bordering countries;
 6. Calls on all neighbouring Balkan Stability Pact countries to contribute to the restoration of democracy and the rule of law in Serbia;
 7. Requests all neighbouring states to cooperate with Studio B and allied stations and to provide them with support in all possible ways;
 8. Calls on the Croatian Government and Croatian broadcasting companies in particular, given that there is not a major language barrier, to support Studio B through exchanges of radio programmes and other initiatives;
 9. Encourages the Serb opposition in their struggle for a free media and welcomes their initiative of addressing the people directly and informing them about new repressive measures of the Serb Government and about intentions to repress united opposition plans;
 10. Stresses that the indictment of crimes against humanity to President Milosevic should lead to his trial before the International Crime Tribunal for Yugoslavia;
 11. Instructs its President to submit this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of Balkan Stability Pact states and the European Broadcasting Union.
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