

THE SAKHAROV PRIZE FOR FREEDOM OF THOUGHT



THE SAKHAROV PRIZE,
THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
AND HUMAN RIGHTS WORLDWIDE



European
Parliament

The Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought,
2024

European Parliament

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1988: Nelson Mandela and Anatoly Marchenko

'We take this as a challenge that we should remain true to the vision we all share of a world free of war and free of poverty and suffering. We take it as a challenge above all to have the courage to fight for justice and peace.'



1989: Alexander Dubček

'Now, as I receive the Sakharov Prize, my thoughts are for those who have earned the right to the renewal and change currently taking place. Even during the most difficult moments of their history, the nations which make up my country have never ceased to feel that they are part of humanity's great struggle for freedom.'



1990: On 10 September 2020, the European Parliament's Conference of Presidents decided to suspend Ms Aung San Suu Kyi from the activities of the Sakharov Prize Community in response to her failure to defend and safeguard the rights of the Rohingya minority in Myanmar, and to her condoning the related violations of human rights and of international humanitarian and human rights law.



1991: Adem Demaçi

'Without freedom of speech there is no dialogue, without dialogue truth cannot be found, and without truth progress is impossible.'



1992: Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo

'We should like to make a pact, a joint commitment to ensure that the defence of life has no frontiers, and that life is valued.' (Hebe de Bonafini)

Introduction

For many years the European Parliament has championed human rights and democracy, with Members of the European Parliament holding expressing their concerns on human rights abuses in the world regardless of borders or regime. And it isn't just sentiment: inspired by Andrei Sakharov's constant campaigning for freedom of thought the European Parliament put this commitment into practice, founding the annual Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in 1988. Presented to the Sakharov Prize laureate if possible by the President of the European Parliament at a plenary session in Strasbourg, the Prize endeavours to embody Sakharov's extraordinary work and carry his message forward to future generations.

As the highest honour bestowed by the EU for actions promoting human rights, the prize is not just a symbolic gesture. As well as the 50,000 euro endowment, the media coverage surrounding the event is a chance to name and shame countries violating human rights and democratic principles. In many cases, the awarding of the prize is also a way to protect laureates against possible reprisals by their own countries. Both the prize and its community allow the European Parliament to assist the laureates, supporting and empowering them in their work. As an instrument of parliamentary diplomacy, the Sakharov Prize has established itself over time as a powerful testament to Parliament's commitment to standing up to dictatorships and to safeguarding human rights around the world.



1993: *Oslobođenje*

'... defending and preserving a Bosnia-Herzegovina that is multi-ethnic, multinational, cosmopolitan and tolerant.' (Zlatko Dizdarević)



1994: Taslima Nasreen

'As a writer I cannot isolate myself from my country or from the world in which I live.'



1995: Leyla Zana

'They will be unable to stem the development and the internationalisation of our peaceful fight ... to live together on equal and brotherly terms ... within the framework of democracy and the mutual respect for rights and the separate identity of each people.'



1996: Wei Jingsheng

The Sakharov Prize is *'an act of encouragement and support on the part of the European people ... for the entire human rights movement in China.'*



1997: Salima Ghezali

'Fundamental democratic questions ... have no chance of escaping from the ghettos in which they have been contained in the style of Machiavelli, while the overwhelming majority of the population see them as the monopoly of a minority insensitive to their lot.'

Chapter 1

The European Parliament and the defence of human rights worldwide

Determined to uphold the democratic principles underpinning the European project, the European Parliament made a commitment to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms very early on in its lifetime. However, it was the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975 that drove its Members to step up this commitment. That same year Parliament had welcomed the news that the Nobel Peace Prize had been awarded to dissident and physicist Andrei Sakharov, who was involved in setting up the Committee on Human Rights in the USSR in 1970. Parliament repeatedly decried the Soviet authorities' decision condemning Sakharov to exile and their refusal to issue him a visa that would allow him to travel to Oslo to receive the prize in person, and called for Sakharov to be released and for him and his wife to be allowed to leave the Soviet Union. It was even debated on whether an empty seat should be left for Sakharov in the Parliamentary chamber.

Following the first Parliamentary elections by direct universal suffrage in 1979, its Members immediately made it a political priority to develop and defend human rights and fundamental freedoms. The number of resolutions adopted on these matters has grown steadily ever since. In 1984, a Subcommittee on Human Rights was set up within Parliament's Political Affairs Committee. This carried on the work of the committee's previous working group dealing with human rights issues, including minority rights and the rule of law in countries outside the EU. From then on, in order to publicly denounce human rights abuses, the Political Affairs Committee would draw up an annual report on the global situation of human rights and the development of a common policy on the issue. But the Parliament was always striving for further action, sending Members to observe elections around the world, ensuring that the EU's international economic and trade agreements contained clauses designed to safeguard human rights and promoting parliamentary democracy by liaising closely with parliaments in non-EU countries.

2. Itself condemns, in the name of the peoples of the European Community the incomprehensible and absurd equation of Zionism with racism, as well as the moral and political consequences which are not conducive to the achievement of a peaceful co-existence for the people or, in particular, the creation of peace in the Middle East;
3. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission of the European Communities, to the President of the General Assembly of the United Nations and to the Parliaments and Governments of the Member States.

Mr Prescott spoke on a question of procedure.

Mr Alfred Bertrand spoke on the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Durieux on behalf of the Political Affairs Committee on the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Andrei Sakharov (Doc. 377/75).

The following spoke: Mr Hamilton, on behalf of the Socialist Group, Mr Alfred Bertrand, on behalf of the Christian-Democratic Group, Mr Hougardy, on behalf of the Liberal and Allies Group, Mr Scott-Hopkins, on behalf of the European Conservative Group and Mr Bordu, on behalf of the Communist and Allies Group.

Parliament then voted on the motion for a resolution and first adopted the preamble.

On paragraph 1, amendment No 1 proposing the replacement of this paragraph by two new paragraphs had been tabled by Mr Durieux, on behalf of the Liberal and Allies Group, Mr Fellermaier, on behalf of Socialist Group, Mr Alfred Bertrand, on behalf of the Christian-Democratic Group, Mr de la Malène, on behalf of the European Progressive Democrats, and Mr Scott-Hopkins, on behalf of the European Conservative Group.

Amendment No 1 was adopted.

Parliament adopted paragraph 2.

Parliament adopted the following resolution:

RESOLUTION

on the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Andrei Sakharov

The European Parliament,

- deeply gratified that the Nobel Peace Prize Committee has awarded the Prize to Andrei Sakharov
 - convinced that this great scientist and champion of human rights has made a direct contribution to the mutual understanding of nations and individuals and thereby rendered an invaluable service to the cause of peace,
1. Condemns the refusal of the Soviet authorities to grant Mr Andrei Sakharov a visa enabling him to go to Oslo to receive the Nobel Peace Prize in person;
 2. Considers that this refusal is manifestly at variance with the undertakings resulting from the final act of the Helsinki conference on security and cooperation in Europe;
 3. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Parliaments and Governments of the Member States and to the Council and Commission of the European Communities.



Andrei Sakharov, 1974
European Parliament
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Andrei Sakharov, 1975
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Friday, 15 February 1980

Marshall and Lord Bethell, on the measures to be taken by the European Communities following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and on the outrageous treatment of Professor Sakharov (Doc. 1-773/79);

- motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Blumenfeld, Mr Vergeer, Mr Ryan, Mrs Maij-Weggen, Mr Lückner, Mr Alber, Mr Penders, Mr Mertens, Mr Habsburg, Mr Zecchino, Mr Aigner, Mr Janssen van Raay, Mr Notenboom, Mrs Walz, Mrs Lenz, Mrs Boot, Mr Majonica, Mr Jonker, Mr Pürsten, Mr Wawrzik, Mr Bocklet, Mrs Rabbethge, Mr Lemmer, Mr Lüster, Mr Pfennig, Mr Müller-Hermann, Mr Nordlohne, Mr Hoffmann, Mr von Hassel, Mr van der Gun, Mr Goppel, Mr Scott-Hopkins, Lady Elles, Mr Prag, Lord Bethell, Lord Douro, Mr Normanton, Mr Möller, Mr Fergusson, Mr Seligman, Mr Berkhouwer, Mr Nord, Mr Haagerup, Mr Irmer, Mr Jürgens, Mr Maher, Mr Nielsen, Mrs Pruvot, Mr Rey, Mr Rossi, Mrs Scrivener, Mrs von Alemann, Mr Bangemann, Mr Damseaux, Mr Combe, Mr Calvez, Mrs Chouraqui, Mr Remilly, Mrs Ewing, Mr Gillo and Mr Deleau, on the Moscow Olympic Games (Doc. 1-779/79/rev.).

The President announced that the motion for a resolution by Mr Ripa di Meana and others (Doc. 1-749/79) had been withdrawn in the meantime.

Mr Ripa di Meana introduced the motion for a resolution (Doc. 1-778/79/rev. II).

IN THE CHAIR: MR PFLIMLIN

Vice-President

Mr Hord introduced the motion for a resolution Doc. 1-773/79.

The following spoke: Mr Penders, on behalf of the Group of the European People's Party (CD Group), Lord Bethell, on behalf of the European Democratic Group, Mr Galluzzi, Communist and Allies Group, Mr Haagerup, on behalf of the Liberal and Democratic Group, Mr Petronio, non-attached member, Mr Martin, Mr de Goede and Mr Fergusson.

Mr Berkhouwer introduced the motion for a resolution Doc. 1-779/79/rev.

The following spoke: Mr Glinne, Mr Pürsten, Mr Hänsch, Mr Sarre, Mr Cariglia and Mr Haferkamp, *Vice-President of the Commission*.

The President declared the joint debate closed.

The following gave explanations of vote: Mr Rogers, Mr Van Minnen, Mrs Bonino, Mr Seal, Mrs van den Heuvel, Mrs Wiczorek-Zeul, Mr Herman, who raised a point of order, Miss Flesch, Mr Gabert, Mr Puletti, Mr Pannella, Mr Kirk, Mr Pelikan and Mrs Macciocchi.

Parliament then voted on the motions for resolutions.

- *Motion for a resolution by Mr Ripa di Meana and others (Doc. 1-778/79/rev. II)*

Parliament adopted the following resolution:

RESOLUTION

on the arrest of the scientist Andrei Sakharov

The European Parliament,

- incensed by the Soviet authorities' treatment of the Nobel Peace Prize winner Andrei Sakharov,
- concerned at the growing wave of oppression mounted by the Soviet authorities against all those campaigning for the respect and defence of human rights in the USSR, and mindful of the need to uphold the inviolable principles of human rights,
- recalling that the signatory States of the Helsinki Final Act on Security and Cooperation in Europe included in their declaration on the principles governing relations between the participant States the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of thought and conscience,

EP resolution on the arrest of the scientist Andrei Sakharov, 1980

Official Journal of the European Communities, C 59 (10.3.1980)

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Andrei Sakharov, 1989

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Friday, 15 February 1980

— considering that the pursuit of the policy of détente is closely linked to the behaviour of each of the signatory States of the Helsinki Final Act,

1. Protests in the strongest possible terms at the decision of the leaders of the Soviet Union to step up their harsh treatment of dissidents;
2. Strongly condemns the action taken by the Soviet authorities against the scientist Andrei Sakharov;
3. Expresses its entire solidarity with Andrei Sakharov, and calls for an immediate end to his enforced exile;
4. Requests all the Community institutions to make active representations to the Government of the Soviet Union with a view to securing the release of Soviet citizens prosecuted for their campaign to defend the civil rights of the peoples of the Soviet Union and to implement the Helsinki Final Act which both the European Economic Community and the USSR formally signed in 1975;
5. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Foreign Ministers meeting in political cooperation, the Commission and the Parliaments of the Member States.

— *Motion for a resolution by Mr Hord and others (Doc. 1-773/79)*

Parliament adopted the following resolution:

RESOLUTION

on the measures to be taken by the European Economic Community following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and on the outrageous treatment of Professor Sakharov

The European Parliament,

- recalling its resolution of 16 January 1980 calling for an immediate review of economic and other relations with Russia, specifically in the fields of agriculture and technology ⁽¹⁾,
 - concerned at the lack of action by the Commission in regard to trade with Russia since the adoption of this resolution,
 - disturbed at the lack of a firm unequivocal statement by the President of the Commission to the Political Affairs Committee on 31 January 1980 on the question of the sales of surplus commodities to Russia,
 - aware of the outrage expressed by the people of Europe over the continuing sales of surplus commodities to Russia with the benefit of subsidies provided by the European taxpayer,
1. Calls on the Commission to impose an immediate embargo on all sales of surplus commodities to Russia involving subsidies;

⁽¹⁾ OJ No C 34, 11. 2. 1980, p. 28.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

PE/I/SCB/PV/84-1

POLITICAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Sub-committee on Human Rights

MINUTES

of the constituent meeting
of Tuesday, 30 October 1984

BRUSSELS

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Annex I : List of Members

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20 November 1984

PE 93.672



1998: Ibrahim Rugova

'In the 10 years since its creation, the Sakharov Prize has, in effect, become the symbol of peace, freedom and humanity.'



1999: Xanana Gusmão

'This prize shows the European Parliament's recognition of my people's courage in fighting for a free homeland where freedom of thought is guaranteed as a right that is inherent to the human condition.'



2000: ¡Basta Ya!

'We are convinced that, when democracy is in danger, the citizens cannot hide behind their anonymity.' (Fernando Savater)



2001: Izzat Ghazzawi, Nurit Peled-Elhanan, Dom Zacarias Kamwenho

'... break this never-ending cycle of war.' (Dom Zacarias Kamwenho)



2002: Oswaldo José Payá Sardiñas

'This time we will carry out the changes by means of this civic movement which is already opening up a new stage in the history of Cuba, in which dialogue, democratic participation and solidarity will prevail. In that way we will build a true peace.'

Chapter 2

The creation of the Sakharov Prize

The idea of creating an annual European Parliament prize emerged during a plenary debate in July 1984 discussing Andrei Sakharov's situation. Its original purpose was to reward work on the development of East-West relations, the freedom of debate and inquiry and the defence of human rights or the rule of law. As French Member and rapporteur Jean-François Deniau put it, the freely elected European Parliament had a duty and responsibility to defend fundamental freedoms. Andrei Sakharov, Mr. Deniau argued, was the perfect embodiment of the award: "Sakharov was a European citizen who was the personification of freedom of thought and expression and who had decided, because of his convictions and his conscience, to renounce all the material advantages and all the honours which were open to him". This powerful challenge was answered by the Parliament's Members: on 13 December 1985, the motion for a resolution creating the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought was adopted by a large majority.

In response to a personal request from the President of the European Parliament, Lord Plumb, in the spring of 1987 Andrei Sakharov gave his support to the project and agreed to the creation of a prize bearing his name. It was ultimately decided that the Sakharov Prize would be awarded to individuals or organisations for outstanding activities or achievements in the field of human rights in Europe and around the world. It was agreed with Parliament's Political Affairs Committee that the first Sakharov Prize should be awarded before the end of 1988, and was won by Nelson Mandela and Anatoli Marchenko – the latter laureate proposed by Sakharov himself.

Friday, 13 December 1985

34. Points out that the issue of US export controls on grounds of national security reasons will be dealt with in the report by the Committee on External Economic Relations concerning restrictions on exports of strategic products and transfers of technology;

*
* * *

35. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council and the United States Congress and Administration.

8. Creation of a Sakharov prize

— Doc. A2-137/85

RESOLUTION

on the creation of a Sakharov prize

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the motion for a resolution by Mr Deniau, on behalf of the Liberal Group, on a 'Sakharov prize' (Doc. 2-945/84),
- having regard to the report of the Political Affairs Committee (Doc. A2-137/85),

- A. having regard to its resolution on the treatment imposed on Andrei Sakharov,
- B. having regard to its resolutions demanding that all parts of the Helsinki Final Act be respected,
- C. mindful of the need, and its own duty, to promote basic human rights, especially freedom of discussion and inquiry, respect for the law, and for international law and conventions and mutual commitments as the foundation of peace among nations,
- D. determined to defend these principles in Europe with the consistency and constancy which are at times lacking, and to make regular and formal awards for outstanding contributions in this field, in the name of a European citizen who embodies freedom of thought and expression,
- E. assuming that Andrei Sakharov will agree to a European Parliament prize for freedom of thought bearing his name,

1. Declares its intention to establish a prize, to be called the European Parliament 'Sakharov Prize' for freedom of thought, which will be awarded each year for study or work on one of the following topics:

- (i) the development of East-West relations in the light of the Helsinki Final Act, in particular the 3rd basket on cooperation in humanitarian and other fields,
- (ii) safeguarding the freedom of scientific inquiry,
- (iii) the defence of human rights and respect for international law,
- (iv) government practice as compared with the letter of constitutional provisions;

2. Instructs its President to award each year, on behalf of the European Parliament, the 'Sakharov prize' for freedom of thought on the basis of a proposal by the Political Affairs Committee adopted by a two-thirds majority;

3. Declares its readiness to provide the necessary funds from its own budget to finance the prize and the administration involved;

4. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission.



Dear Nicholas,

I am grateful to you for the message you sent me from Sir Henry Plumb and I have familiarised myself with the situation regarding the Prize to which the European Parliament has assigned my name. It goes without saying that I have no objection to this and I accept the idea as an important act of appreciation of my work in defence of human rights.

I think that the award of prizes like this one is useful, since it will once again attract attention to the human rights problem and will encourage people who have made a contribution to this end.

I cannot express my opinion in detail about the operation of the prize, but I would like, as soon as the various candidates are put forward, to be acquainted with their work, so as to have some indication of who the prize is being awarded to and for what.

Please pass my agreement together with my gratitude for the honour thus granted me to Sir Henry Plumb and his colleagues.

With respect and in friendship,

10th April 1987

Andrei Sakharov

107120 Moscow
48b Chkalov Street
Appt. 68



2003: Kofi Annan and the staff of the United Nations – 2003, headquarters in New York, USA

'In its long history, Europe has seen more than its fair share of war, tyranny and terrible suffering. But Europeans have replaced that with a future of hope. You have pursued the path of peace through multilateralism. And today, the European Union is a shining light of tolerance, human rights, and international cooperation.'



2004: Zhanna Litvina

'The prize is such an important signal for us because we understand our problems, but they are not just a matter of upholding our own professional principles. It is also about defending the rights of all our citizens to receive objective, uncensored information.'



2005: The 'Ladies in White', Reporters Without Borders and Hauwa Ibrahim

'... as though double standards were being applied, as though some lives were worth more than others and as though there were some freedoms that affect us and others that do not. It is imperative that we put a stop to this way of thinking.'



2006: Aliaksandr Milinkevich

'There is a lot you can do! You can help us to break down the barriers to information and the restricted view of the world imposed upon my fellow countrymen by government propaganda, to create a public space conducive to open debate amongst the citizens, bringing together independent authors, intellectuals and moral authorities.'



2007: Salih Mahmoud Osman

'The recognition of the European Commission and of you, the European Parliament, for the work of human rights defenders in Sudan gives us the courage and determination to continue to speak for the victims, and relieve some of their suffering.'

Chapter 3

The Statute of the Sakharov Prize

Adopted in July 1988, the Statute of the Sakharov Prize originally stipulated that laureates would receive 5000 ecus and that anyone could be a candidate, regardless of nationality and place of residence. The European Parliament would also facilitate the publication of the award holder's written works. Initial nominations for the Sakharov Prize required the support of at least 25 Members, followed by a proposal of three nominees by the European Parliament's Political Affairs Committee to the enlarged Bureau, if necessary after the consultation of Sakharov himself. It was then up to the Bureau to select the final candidate. The Sakharov Prize would then be presented during a plenary session by the President of Parliament. Over the years, the value of the prize has gradually increased to 50,000 euro in recognition of the importance of those fighting for human rights worldwide.

But further change was to follow. In 2003, major modifications were made to the Statute of the Sakharov Prize on the basis of proposals by German Member Elmar Brok, the then Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy. In an effort to widen the Prize's scope it was decided that the prize should honour a particular achievement (intellectual or artistic work or active contribution) in the field of the defence of

human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular freedom of expression. The prize would also now honour safeguarding the rights of minorities, upholding international law, the development of democracy and implementation of the rule of law. Nominations could now be supported by a political group, although individual Members could give their support to only one nominee. It was then the task of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to propose three nominees to the Conference of Presidents, which comprised of the President of the European Parliament and the political group chairs, where the final laureate would be selected. The statute was amended further in 2006. As a result of the enlargements of the European Union and the increase in the number of Members, any potential applications now required support from 40 Members. Signed nominations accompanied by supporting evidence would be assessed in a joint meeting of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET), the Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI) and the Committee on Development (DEVE). A shortlist of three candidates is now drawn up through a vote by AFET and DEVE committees, and then submitted to the Conference of Presidents for a final vote. The winner is typically announced in October, and the award ceremony takes place in December at plenary sitting in Strasbourg.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

BUREAU SECRETARIAT

Strasbourg, 7 July 1988

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

At its meeting of 6 July 1988 the enlarged Bureau adopted the Statute instituting the Sakharov Prize. In accordance with Parliament's resolution of 13 December 1985, the prize is to be awarded every year, for the first time in December 1988, for outstanding services to human rights.

To be eligible, nominations must be submitted by 15 September 1988 and be supported by at least 25 Members of Parliament. The complete text of the Statute will be published in the next bulletin of Parliament and is also obtainable from the Secretariat of the Political Affairs Committee, on request.

PE 124.931/BUR.

1947 C. B. BRYAN

Mrs Nicole FONTAINE
President
European Parliament

The Enlarged Bureau of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy adopted last week its proposal for the Conference of Presidents concerning this year's calendar for the Sakharov-prize (see Annex I) and, in addition, several modifications to the Sakharov prize statute.

- the updating of the text to today's political reality (in particular paragraphs 2, 3, 4 + 5);
- the adaptation of the provisions for the required signatures to Parliament's Rules of Procedure (i.e. "support of at least 32 Members, or a Political Group"(instead of 25 signatures only) with a new proviso that "individual Members may support only one candidate";
- finally it is proposed (paragraph 7) that if a candidate has received a two-thirds majority of the votes cast in the Committee on Foreign Affairs, only the name of this candidate will be transmitted to the Conference of Presidents. If none of the candidates obtains a two-thirds majority the names of the three candidates who obtained the most votes will be forwarded to the Conference of Presidents (old procedure).

Yours sincerely

Dear ~~John~~

Encl. Annex I - proposal for 2001 calendar
Annex II proposal for revised statute

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PE 305.259/BUR

STATUTS DU "PRIX SAKHAROV" POUR LA LIBERTÉ DE L'ESPRIT

Version en vigueur
(adoptée le 6 juillet 1988
et modifiée le 22 novembre 1989)

Amendements

1. Il est institué le "Prix Sakharov" pour la liberté de l'esprit (ci-après, le prix) décerné annuellement par le Parlement européen.	1. Le Parlement européen décerne annuellement le "prix Sakharov pour la liberté de l'esprit".
<p>2. Ce prix est destiné à récompenser une étude ou un ouvrage rédigé sur un des thèmes suivants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - le développement des relations Est-Ouest par rapport à l'Acte final d'Helsinki, notamment la 3ème corbeille relative à la coopération dans les domaines humanitaires et autres, - la protection de la liberté d'enquête scientifique, - la défense des droits de l'homme et le respect du droit international - la pratique gouvernementale par rapport à la lettre des constitutions. <p>Par étude ou ouvrage, il faut comprendre également toute production intellectuelle ou artistique non écrite.</p> <p>Ce prix peut également honorer des engagements, activités ou réalisations dans le secteur défini ci-dessus.</p>	<p>2. Ce prix est destiné à récompenser une réalisation particulière dans un des domaines suivants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Défense des droits de l'homme et des libertés fondamentales, en particulier du droit à la liberté d'opinion, - Protection des droits des minorités, - Respect du droit international public, - Développement de la démocratie et mise en place de l'état de droit. <p>Par "réalisation", il faut entendre toute production intellectuelle ou artistique l'engagement, ou l'action menée dans les domaines cités plus haut.</p>
	3. Le montant du prix est de 50.000 euros. Le Parlement européen se réserve le droit de publier un ouvrage récompensé.
4. Le prix peut être attribué soit à des personnes physiques, soit à des groupements et organisations, indépendamment du fait qu'ils disposent, ou non, de la personnalité morale. La nationalité et le lieu d'établissement des intéressés n'ont pas d'incidence sur l'attribution du prix.	4. Le prix peut être attribué soit à des personnes physiques, soit à des groupements et organisations, indépendamment du fait qu'ils disposent, ou non, de la personnalité morale. La nationalité et le domicile ou le siège des candidats n'ont pas d'incidence sur l'attribution du prix.

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PE 305.259/BUR

**NEW STATUTE OF THE
SAKHAROV PRIZE FOR FREEDOM OF THOUGHT**

**Adopted by the Conference of Presidents
at its meeting of 15 May 2003**

1. The European Parliament will annually award the Sakharov Prize for freedom of thought.
2. The prize is awarded for a particular achievement in one of the following fields:
 - defence of human rights and fundamental freedoms, particularly the right to free expression,
 - safeguarding the rights of minorities,
 - respect for international law,
 - development of democracy and implementation of the rule of law.

'Achievement' means any intellectual or artistic composition or active work in the above fields.

3. The prize is EUR 50 000.

The European Parliament has the right to publish any work for which the prize is awarded.

4. The prize may be awarded to natural persons or to associations or organisations, regardless of whether or not they have legal personality.

The nationality, place of residence or seat of the candidates is immaterial.

5. If a written work is submitted in support of an application, it must be in one of the official languages of the European Union.

An achievement within the terms of Article 2 must be substantiated and verifiable.

6. Applications must secure the support of at least 25 Members, or a political group, of the European Parliament. Individual Members may support only one candidate. Each proposal must be signed and include supporting evidence.
7. Applications which meet the criteria set out above shall be assessed within the Foreign Affairs Committee. Following that assessment, it shall propose three candidates, in alphabetical order, from which the Conference of Presidents shall select the final winner.

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PE 305.259/CPG/ANN./FIN

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Sakharov Prize winner selection procedure, 2021

European Parliament

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SAKHAROV PRIZE FOR FREEDOM OF THOUGHT

The European Parliament stands with
those who defend our freedoms





2008: Hu Jia

'If the truth be told, sometimes one's courage is not enough. Sometimes the price to be paid is very, very high.' (Zeng Jinyan)



2009: Memorial

'Freedom of thought is the basis of all other freedoms.' (Sergei Kovalev)



2010: Guillermo Fariñas

'We are the change.'



2011: The 'Arab Spring'

'I would like to tell you about how proud I am of all the martyrs of the Arab revolution. We will not betray them; we will continue along the road ...' (Asmaa Mahfouz)



2012: Nasrin Sotoudeh and Jafar Panahi

'My creation is the result of a personal perception of fact, of life and ontological experiences in my specific society during a lifetime.' (Jafar Panahi)

Chapter 4

The Sakharov Prize community

In 2008, the European Parliament decided to build on the impact of the prize by launching a network to enhance the defence of human rights through the Sakharov Prize Community, in time to coincide with the prize's 20th anniversary. Its creation recognised the special role of Sakharov Prize laureates as Ambassadors for Freedom of Thought. Together with the European Parliament they are able to join their efforts through common action in support of human rights defenders around the world. The community allows laureates react together to global events in real-time: against the background of the Covid-19 pandemic, 14 Sakharov Prize Laureates and 62 Members recently signed an open letter calling for the immediate release of all prisoners of conscience and human rights defenders, including all Sakharov Prize laureates.

The Sakharov Prize community honours the special role of Sakharov Prize laureates as Ambassadors for Freedom of Thought and strengthens cooperation on human rights issues. It enables joint actions between laureates and the Parliament by connecting laureates, Parliamentary Members and representatives of civil society, providing a direct communication channel for both laureates and the European Parliament to address human rights issues. Its members regularly give Sakharov lectures across Europe to raise awareness of their causes and spark public debate in European capitals. The community organises regular conferences to bring these inspiring voices together, with the most recent event in 2018 marking the prize's 30th anniversary. These conferences encourage debate on human rights globally and provide an opportunity to take stock of the community's achievements and identify future challenges.

This community allows laureates to communicate their message in other, more creative forms as well: in a joint initiative enabled through this network an audio-visual

performance "White torture underground poetry" was recently staged by Lorent Saleh, one of the Sakharov Prize 2017 laureates from the democratic opposition in Venezuela. The performance took place at the garage of the European Parliament in Brussels in February 2020, plunging the audience in the oppressive environment of a sophisticated modern torture centre and bringing the reality of human rights abuses starkly into the public realm.

In an effort to empower the next generation of human rights defenders to serve as agents of democratic change in their own countries, the European Parliament has been awarding Sakharov fellowships since 2016. Given to up to 14 human rights defenders from countries outside the EU and now with connections in over 40 countries, these fellowships provide a powerful platform to activists who initiate real change. Just one recent example of this is the denouncement by Sakharov fellows of the persecution of the Bahá'í minority in Iran and their request for the support of the international community to counter this injustice.

Sakharov fellows are given the opportunity to take part in a two-week intensive training course to further equip them in their important work, with one week in Brussels and another at the Global Campus of Human Rights in Venice. Here participants can learn more about EU and international human rights frameworks, policies and mechanisms, and are given the opportunity to meet with Members, academics and NGO representatives. They also learn practical tools designed to help communicate with the public, seek funding and better understand the security issues that human rights defenders often face. The programme has been organised annually since 2016 and has continued remotely during the 2020 Covid-19 crisis, allowing fellows to keep strong ties with the European Parliament and EU Delegations in their own countries.



First meeting of the Sakharov Prize community, 2008
European Parliament
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30 years of Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought
European Parliament
© European Union 2018 – Source : EP



Ten years of the Sakharov Prize community, 2018
European Parliament
© European Union



Logo of the Sakharov Prize and Sakharov Prize community
European Parliament
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2013: Malala Yousafzai

'These children do not want an iPhone, an Xbox, a PlayStation or chocolates: they just want a book and a pen.'



2014: Denis Mukwege

'Justice should also be placed at the centre of the peace process, and it is necessary to step up the fight to eliminate impunity for the most serious crimes, including crimes of sexual violence.'



2015: Raif Badawi

'Raif is not a criminal. He is a writer and a free-thinker, that is all. Raif Badawi's crime is being a free voice in a country that does not accept anything other than a single opinion and a single thought.' (Ensaf Haidar)



2016: Nadia Murad Basee Taha and Lamiya Aji Bashar

'I think that I can speak on behalf of the victims. The Sakharov Prize gives me the strength to continue. That is why I have taken the decision to become a voice for the voiceless.' (Lamiya Aji Bashar)



2017: The democratic opposition in Venezuela

'This award gives us more energy to continue fighting for the values and principles of democracy.' (Antonio Ledezma)

Chapter 5

Sakharov Prize laureates

Since its creation over thirty years ago, the Sakharov Prize has recognised a wide array of individuals and groups of human rights activists worldwide who are working tirelessly for justice and equality in their societies. Long deprived of real power in the field of foreign policy, the European Parliament immediately realised the potential of the prize in establishing its commitment to fundamental rights on the world stage and have taken this opportunity wherever possible. Laureates have come from a diverse range of cultures and regions and have included as many forms of activist as one can think of. Spokespeople for minorities, an anti-terrorist group, an activist for a ban on torture, a cartoonist, long-detained prisoners of conscience, a film director, the collective body of the United Nations and even a child defending the right to education – all have been recognised by the European Parliament for their outstanding work.

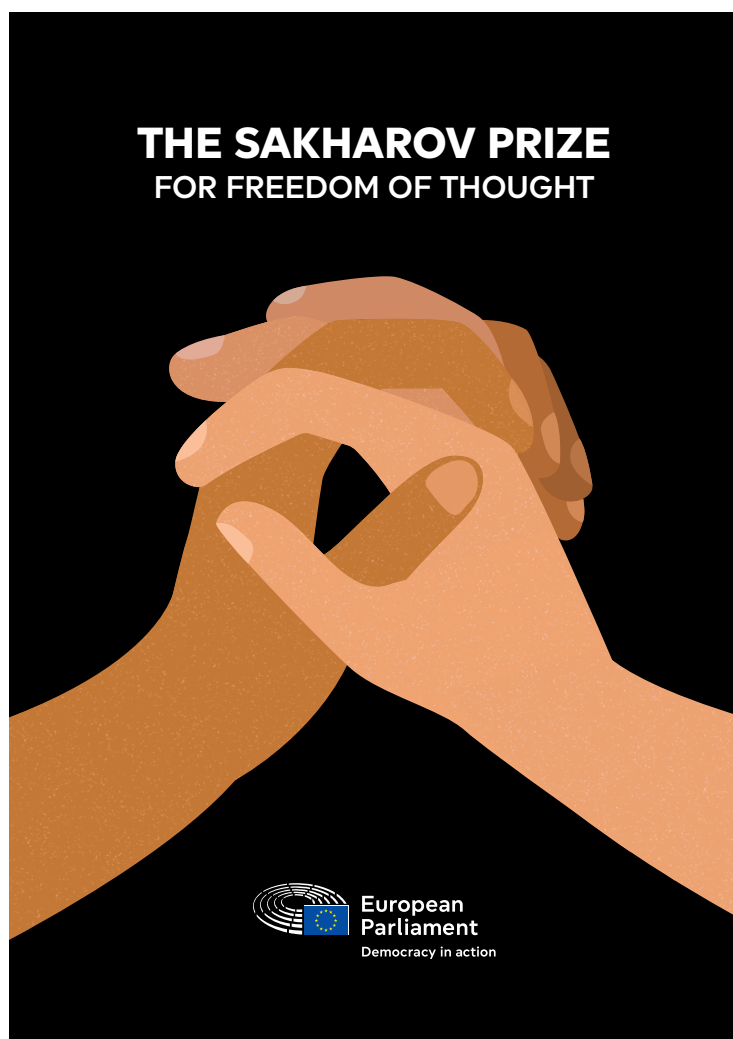
In honouring such people and organisations, the prize actively promotes values upheld by the Parliament such as freedom of expression, minority rights, respect for international law, the establishment of democracy and the rule of law. Many of the laureates already had and would still spend years in prison. Some even sacrificed their lives to protect these values. Significantly, some Sakharov Prize laureates later went on to win the Nobel Peace Prize. What all Sakharov Prize laureates have in common is a clear understanding of how necessary it is to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms, and a willingness to dedicate their lives to this difficult struggle.

In December 2019, the 'Sakharov Walk of Freedom' was inaugurated on the Esplanade Solidarność 1980, right in front of the European Parliament in Brussels. The Walk consists of 43 ceramic tiles carrying short texts on all Sakharov Prize laureates, arranged chronologically from 1988 to the present day. They are there to remind those in the Parliament on a daily basis the importance of our rights as individuals, and the necessity to fight for them.

As well as awarding the Sakharov Prize, the European Parliament continues to uphold and act on its values through many other channels. Its Members regularly speak out about human rights issues in non-EU countries in human rights resolutions at plenary sessions. As these rights are considered universal the response is the same whether the violation takes place in Myanmar/Burma, some 8,000 kilometres away, or in Belarus, which borders on the Union. Important resolutions have regularly been adopted by the European Parliament highlighting important humanitarian issues and Members work to defend democratic systems around the globe, even travelling to observe elections, mediate in conflicts and support fledgling parliaments. As just one example, the European Parliament recently observed the early legislative elections in Peru in January 2020. The European Parliament understands that human rights don't just end at the EU's borders, and acts on this reality wherever it can.



Group photo of Sakharov Prize winners, 2018
European Parliament
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Sakharov Prize 2024 Poster
© EU 2024



Inauguration of the Sakharov Walk of Freedom, 2019
European Parliament
© European Union



2018: Oleg Sentsov

'It is a huge honour, and also a huge responsibility. I accept and take this prize not as a personal honour, but as a prize for all Ukrainian political prisoners who have ever been in Russian prisons, and a prize in honour of all Ukrainian political prisoners who are still there.'



2019: Ilham Tohti

'Do you see a problem with the way the Chinese Government is treating Uyghur people? If you see a problem, please work towards a solution.' (Jewher Ilham)



2020: The democratic opposition in Belarus

'Without a free Belarus, Europe is not fully free either. [...] I have only one wish this year. I want every Belarusian who is now in jail or was forced to live in exile to return home.' (Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya)



2021: Alexei Navalny

'I am just one of those many who fight corruption, because I consider it not only as the cause of poverty and degradation of states, but also as the main threat to human rights. I dedicate my prize to all kinds of anti-corruption fighters around the world.'



2022: The Ukrainian people

'This award is for those Ukrainians fighting on the ground. For those who have been forced to flee. For those who have lost relatives and friends. For all those who stand up and fight for what they believe in. I know that the brave people of Ukraine will not give up and neither will we.' (Roberta Metsola, President of the European Parliament)

Chapter 6

The life of Andrei Sakharov

Born on 21 May 1921 in Moscow, Andrei Dmitrievitch Sakharov grew up in a family of scientists and studied physics at the Lomonosov University in the capital. Following the Second World War he worked in a laboratory focusing on the development of nuclear weapons. Sakharov played a major role in the development of the Soviet Union's first thermonuclear bomb, which was tested in August 1953. A model Soviet citizen, he was winner of the Lenin Prize in 1950 and the youngest member of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

Considered the 'father of the Soviet H-bomb', Sakharov was honoured by the Communist regime for his contribution to the Soviet Union's nuclear power. However, Sakharov became increasingly worried by the growing number of nuclear tests and began a reflective journey that would gradually lead him to dissidence. Initially committing himself against the arms race, Sakharov soon fully devoted himself to the defence of human rights and the cause of freedom and became one of the Soviet Union's leading dissenting intellectuals.

In 1968 Sakharov secretly published *Reflections on Progress, Peaceful Coexistence and Intellectual Freedom*, which advocated for the deepening of a peaceful coexistence strategy between the United States and the Soviet Union. Sakharov also publicly defended political prisoners, founding a Committee for Human Rights and the Defence of Victims of Political Trials in 1970. Due to these beliefs he became subject to increasingly repressive measures by the Soviet regime and was the victim of vitriolic attacks from the press.

Sakharov was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1975, but as he was prohibited from leaving the Soviet Union his wife Elena Bonner received the prize in Oslo in the name of her husband. He had all his honorary titles removed in 1980 and was placed under house arrest until 1986. But as government policy relaxed under glasnost attitudes softened, and he was elected to the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences. Sakharov eventually became a member of the Congress of People's Deputies of the Soviet Union, before passing away later that year in Moscow on 14 December 1989 aged 68.



Andrei Sakharov, 1988

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Andrei Sakharov, 1988

European Parliament

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Andrei Sakharov, 1973

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Individuals who have won the Sakharov Prize

Nelson Mandela, symbol of the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, and (posthumously) **Anatoly Marchenko**, Soviet dissident, **1988**

Alexander Dubček, Czechoslovak politician. Father of the 'Prague Spring' liberation movement, **1989**

Aung San Suu Kyi, opponent of the military regime in Myanmar, **1990**

Adem Demaçi, Kosovo Albanian writer and chair of the Kosovar Human Rights Council, **1991**

Taslima Nasreen, doctor, intellectual and opponent of Islamic fundamentalism and the repression of women in Bangladesh, **1994**

Leyla Zana, activist for the human rights of the Kurdish people in Turkey, **1995**

Wei Jingsheng, Chinese dissident, **1996**

Salima Ghezali, teacher, journalist and activist for the emancipation of women, freedom of expression and democracy in Algeria, **1997**

Ibrahim Rugova, head of the Democratic League of Kosovo, **1998**

Xanana Gusmão, head of the independence movement in East Timor, **1999**

Oswaldo José Payá Sardiñas, promoter of democratic change and national reconciliation in Cuba, **2002**

Hauwa Ibrahim, lawyer and advocate for women and young people convicted under sharia law in Nigeria, **2005**

Aliaksandr Milinkevich, leader of the opposition in Belarus, **2006**

Salih Mahmoud Osman, human rights lawyer in Sudan, **2007**

Hu Jia, human rights defender in China, **2008**

Guillermo Fariñas, political dissident and human rights defender in Cuba, **2010**

Nasrin Sotoudeh and **Jafar Panahi**, human rights activists in Iran, **2012**

Malala Yousafzai, activist for women's rights to education, freedom and self-determination in Pakistan, **2013**

Denis Mukwege, gynaecologist involved in the treatment of rape victims in the Democratic Republic of Congo, **2014**

Raif Badawi, activist for freedom of thought and freedom of expression in Saudi Arabia, **2015**

Nadia Murad Basee Taha and **Lamiya Aji Bashar**, defenders of the Yazidi community and survivors of Daesh in Iraq, **2016**

Oleg Sentsov, Ukrainian filmmaker and opponent of Russian rule in Crimea, **2018**

Ilham Tohti, activist for the human rights of the Uyghur minority in China, **2019**

Alexei Navalny, activist and political prisoner, **2021**

Groups that have won the Sakharov Prize

The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, a group of women opposed to the military dictatorship in Argentina, **1992**

Oslobođenje, a multi-ethnic Sarajevo newspaper, **1993**

¡Basta Ya!, a citizens' initiative campaigning for human rights, democracy and tolerance in the Spanish Basque Country, **2000**

Izzat Ghazzawi, chair of the Palestinian Writers' Union, **Nurit Peled-Elhanan**, Israeli academic linked to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, and **Dom Zacarias Kamwenho**, Archbishop of Lubango, President of the Inter-church Committee for Peace in Angola, **2001**

Kofi Annan and the staff of the United Nations, **2003**

Belarusian Association of Journalists, **2004**

The 'Ladies in White', a peaceful opposition movement in Cuba, and **Reporters Without Borders**, an international organisation defending press freedom throughout the world, **2005**

Memorial, a Russian association promoting human rights and democracy in post-Soviet states, **2009**

The 'Arab Spring', **2011**

The democratic opposition in Venezuela, **2017**

The democratic opposition in Belarus, **2020**

The Ukrainian people, **2022**

Jina Mahsa Amini and the **"Woman, Life, Freedom Movement"** in Iran, **2023**

María Corina Machado and President-elect **Edmundo González Urrutia**, representing all Venezuelans fighting to restore freedom and democracy, **2024**



2023: Jina Mahsa Amini and the "Woman, Life, Freedom Movement" in Iran

'We stand with those who, even from prison, continue to keep Women, Life and Freedom alive. [...] this House remembers their struggle and continues to honour all those who have paid the ultimate price for liberty.' (Roberta Metsola, President of the European Parliament)



2024: María Corina Machado and President-elect Edmundo González Urrutia

'In their quest for a fair, free and peaceful transition of power, they have fearlessly upheld values that millions of Venezuelans and the European Parliament hold so dear: justice, democracy and the rule of law.' (Roberta Metsola, President of the European Parliament)

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The Sakharov Prize

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