The Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought

The Sakharov Prize is a symbol of Parliament's commitment for human rights

The **Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought** was set up in 1988 and is awarded each year by the European Parliament. 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.

Parliament awards the human rights prize at a formal sitting held in Strasbourg on or around 10 December, the day on which the **United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights** was signed in 1948. Over the years, Greens have often supported candidates who also supported environmental progress in their fight for fundamental rights (like the Israeli nuclear hostage Mordechai Vanunu or Russian environmental journalist Grygory Pasko). In 2008, the Greens/EFA nominee, Chinese dissident Hu Jia was awarded the Prize. **Hu Jia** has campaigned for human rights, environmental and HIV/AIDS causes, and who is still serving a three-and-a-half year prison sentence for "subverting state power". In his absence his wife Zeng Jinyan addressed a video message from Beijing to the Members of the Parliament while there was a symbolic empty chair was in the middle of the Chamber. ***"By awarding Hu Jia the Sakharov Prize, the European Parliament sends a message of hope to all the silenced voices in China and Tibet. The award is all the more significant in the face of considerable pressure from the Chinese authorities. Awarding the Sakharov Prize to Hu Jia puts human rights back at the heart of EU-China relations following China's failure to keep its pre-Olympic promises on raising human rights standards"*** said Greens/EFA Co-presidents **Daniel Cohn-Bendit.** In 2009, the Greens/EFA propose **Lyudmila Alexeyeva, Oleg Orlov and Sergei Kovalev on behalf of Memorial and all other human rights defenders in Russia.**

Memorial is an organisation promoting the truth about the political repression of the Soviet Union and fights against current human rights abuses in post-Soviet states to ensure their democratic future. **Next steps** 6 Oct 2009 - A shortlist of three finalists chosen by Foreign Affairs and Development Committees 22 Oct 2009 - Decision of the Conference of Presidents (EP political group leaders) on the winner

14 Dec 2009 - Joint meeting of Foreign Affairs and Development Committees and Human Rights Subcomittee with the winner
16 Dec 2009 - Official award ceremony at plenary sitting in Strasbourg SAKHAROV PRIZE for Freedom of Thought - List of prize winners

1988 Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela and Anatoli Marchenko (posthumously)
1989 Alexander Dubcek
1990 Aung San Suu Ky
1991 Adem Demaçi
1992 Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo
1993 Oslobodjenje
1994 Taslima Nasreen
1995 Leyla Zana
1996 Wei Jingsheng
1997 Salima Ghezali
1998 Ibrahim Rugova
1999 José Alejandro 'Xanana' Gusmão
2000 ¡Basta Ya!
2001 Izzat Ghazzawi,Nurit Peled-Elhanan and Dom Zacarias Kamwenho
2002 Oswaldo José Payá Sardiñas
2003 UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, and all UN staff
2004 Zhanna Litvina, President of the Belarus Association of Journalists
2005 Ladies in White, Hauwa Ibrahim and Reporters Without Borders
2006 Alexander Milinkevich
2007 Salih Mahmoud Osman
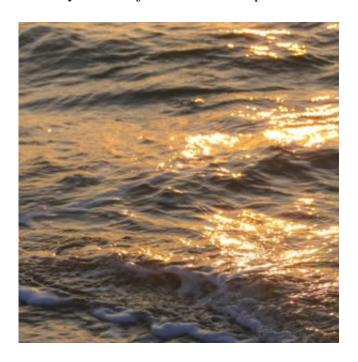2008 Hu Jia

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