

THURSDAY, 16 JULY 2009

IN THE CHAIR: MR VIDAL-QUADRAS

Vice-President

1. Opening of the sitting

2. Approval of the minutes of the previous sitting: see Minutes

3. Composition of committees: see Minutes

4. Voting time

President. – We shall now proceed to the vote.

(For results and other details of the vote: see Minutes)

4.1. Appointments to committees: see Minutes

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Rebecca Harms (Verts/ALE). – *(DE)* Mr President, yesterday we received very sad news from Grozny in Chechnya. The journalist Natalia Estemirova, who was well known to everyone in our group, was murdered there. She was found dead just beyond the border between Chechnya and Ingushetia after being kidnapped in Grozny. Natalia Estemirova was extremely committed to her work for Memorial in Chechnya. We would ask you to agree to our request to remember this very committed journalist and pioneering fighter for freedom and human rights in Chechnya by observing a minute's silence.

(Applause)

5. Announcement by the President

President. – *(After the speech by Mrs Harms, see item 4.1).* Yes, Mrs Harms. Regarding the matter that you have just mentioned, I must inform the House that President Buzek has made a public statement, which I will read to you.

It is with great sadness that I have learned of the tragic death of Natalia Estemirova, who was abducted earlier today in Grozny. On behalf of the European Parliament, I would like to express our sympathy and condolences to the family and friends of the deceased.

Natalia Estemirova was a human rights activist and a leading researcher, with Memorial, on Chechnya. In 2005 she was awarded the Robert Schuman Medal by the EPP Group in the European Parliament. We in the European Parliament have appreciated her work in the fields of human rights, promoting democratic accountability and the implementation of the rule of law.

We strongly call on the authorities of the Russian Federation to start a fully fledged inquiry into her death and to do their utmost to bring those responsible for this tragic death to justice. The European Parliament is at the forefront of promoting democracy, implementing the rule of law and defending human rights. It is, therefore, our obligation to support and show our solidarity with all those who struggle everywhere in the world for the same values, as was the case with Natalia Estemirova.

(Applause)

Ms Harms, the Presidency agrees with your proposal to hold a minute's silence in memory of Natalia Estemirova.

(The House observed a minute's silence)

6. Documents received: see Minutes

7. Forwarding of texts adopted during the sitting: see Minutes

8. Dates of forthcoming sittings: see Minutes

9. Adjournment of the session

President. – I declare the session of the European Parliament adjourned.

(The sitting was closed at 9.15)