

MEPs call on Russia to stop illegitimate prosecution of Lithuanian judges

- Russia should end politically motivated prosecutions of Lithuanian judges
- Member states and Interpol should ignore Russia's requests for arrest warrant
- More cooperation and consistency needed across the EU towards Russia

Russia should stop illegitimately prosecuting Lithuanian judges and EU countries should refuse any legal assistance, says European Parliament.

In the text adopted by 493 votes in favour, 43 against and 86 abstentions on Thursday, MEPs call on Russia to end the politically motivated prosecution of Lithuanian judges and prosecutors who found 67 Russian, Belarussian and Ukrainian citizens guilty of war crimes against Lithuania, following the events of 13 January 1991 in Vilnius.

Parliament denounces Russia's actions as "unacceptable external influence", "politically motivated" and a violation of fundamental legal values, especially the independence of judiciary.

MEPs ask all member states to not transfer any personal data to Russia that could be used in criminal proceedings against Lithuanian judges as well as to refuse Russia's requests for related legal assistance. EU countries and Interpol should also ignore all international arrest warrants against the accused Lithuanian officials", they say.

They also call for EU member states to be more consistent in their policies towards Russia.

Background

On 13 January 1991, following Lithuania's declaration of independence from the Soviet Union, fourteen peaceful civilians were killed and nearly 800 wounded during a crackdown by Soviet troops on the Vilnius TV tower.

In March 2019, a Lithuanian Court issued a ruling on this act of aggression against Lithuania by finding 67 people, including the then Defence minister and KGB chief of the Soviet Union, guilty of war crimes.

Russia did not respond to the Lithuanian judiciary's request for cooperation. The majority of those accused were therefore put on trial in absentia. In 2018, Russia retaliated by starting a criminal case against the Lithuanian judges, prosecutors and investigators involved in investigating the tragic events on 13 January 1991 in Vilnius.

Further information

[Adopted text \(28.11.2019\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[Watch a video recording of the debate \(25.11.2019\)](#)

[Committee discussion: Recent actions by the Russian Federation against Lithuanian judges](#)

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