



Press release

EFA Board Thanks European Parliament for Oleg Sentsov's Sakharov Prize

The Board of the European Film Academy wishes to express its profound gratitude toward the European Parliament for awarding the Ukrainian filmmaker Oleg Sentsov, jailed in Russia, with the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought.

“We thank the European Parliament,” says EFA Chairwoman Agnieszka Holland, “for this recognition of a man who not only believes in human rights but also fights for them – even if it means personal damage to body and soul.”

Oleg Sentsov, a Crimean native who opposed the annexation of Crimea by Russia, is serving a 20-year prison term in Russia after being convicted of terrorism at the end of what Amnesty International described as “an unfair trial in a military court” He ended a 145-day hunger earlier this month, saying he had to do so to avoid being force-fed by the prison authorities. From the beginning on, the European Film Academy has been campaigning for his release.

As was just announced, the European Parliament has awarded Oleg Sentsov with its prestigious 2018 Sakharov Prize for human rights. “We hope that this will lead to another wave of international protest and empathy which will in the end bring Oleg back home to his colleagues, his friends and family – including his two children,” says EFA President Wim Wenders.

Named in honour of the Soviet physicist and dissident Andrei Sakharov, the prize was introduced by the European Parliament in 1988 to honour individuals and organisations who defend human rights and fundamental freedoms. The prize is to be awarded during a ceremony in the parliament in Strasbourg on 12 December.

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