

Mrs Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission

Charles Michel
President of the European Council

Mr Josep Borrell Fontelles
High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs
and Security Policy / Vice-President of the Commission

Brussels, 2nd of February 2024

Dear President von der Leyen,

Dear President Michel,

Dear High Representative Borrell Fontelles,

We, the undersigned Members of the European Parliament, hereby state our position regarding the Russian presidential election, taking place in March this year.

The re-election of Vladimir Putin during these elections will be illegitimate. Therefore, the European Union should not recognise the results of this election and should not recognise Vladimir Putin as President of Russia after his reinauguration.

Vladimir Putin's regime is criminal, corrupt, responsible for crimes against its own people, and responsible for countless illegal acts and crimes against humanity outside of the borders of the Russian Federation. The war against Ukraine has lasted for almost ten years during which Putin's regime has occupied and annexed several territories of Ukraine. The Russian presidential elections are also set to take place in these Russian-occupied territories of Ukraine. The organisation of an election by the occupying force in the annexed and occupied territories is a criminal farce, the results of which cannot be considered legitimate.

The Russian President has changed the country's constitution in order to permanently secure the position of President for himself, to guarantee himself a position of power until the end of his life. The state of democracy in Russia is in ruins, furthermore, legislative powers and institutions designed to ensure the rule of law have been transformed into subsidiaries of the dictator. Free and independent journalism has ceased to exist, and has been replaced by a propaganda machine which shamelessly and unrestrainedly glorifies the regime. Civil rights and freedoms have been trampled, and the freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly have been suppressed by threats of most severe punishments. Elections held under these conditions are illegitimate without a doubt, and a dictator seeking to entrench his power with this kind of an election cannot be considered as legitimate head of state.

Whereas it is improbable that observers from the OSCE or other competent international organisations are invited to monitor this election, it is abundantly clear that no international observers should be sent to participate. Any kind of election observation, even if the assessment criticises the process, will be used to try to legitimise this Russian presidential election, which is unacceptable.

We are convinced that the European Union, its institutions, and its Member States have to clearly express their position regarding the illegitimacy of the 2024 Russian presidential election, and should not recognise the leader of a criminal regime as a legitimately elected President.

Sincerely,

Riho Terras

Jaak Madison

Dorien Rookmaker

Petras Auštrevičius

Michaela Šojdrová

Henna Virkkunen

Ivars Ijabs

Miriam Lexmann

Fabio Massimo Castaldo

Inese Vaidere

Pirkko Ruuhonen-Lerner

Liudas Mažylis

Anja Haga

David Lega

Roberts Zīle

Andrius Kubilius

Rasa Juknevičienė

Attila Ara-Kovács

Aušra Maldeikienė,

Bergur Løkke Rasmussen

Juozas Olekas

Alexander Alexandrov Yordanov

Antonio López-Istúriz White

Vlad Gheorghe

Kosma Złotowski

Carles Puigdemont i Casamajó

Antoni Comín i Oliveres

Andrey Kovatchev

Karen Melchior