



COPIE

Brussels, November 21, 2017

Open letter from European Parliamentarians in support of Ukrainian journalists **Dmitro VASILETS, **Evgen TIMONIN** and **Vasil MURAVITSKY****

We, Members of the European Parliament, are calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Ukrainian TV journalist **Dmitro Vasilets** and his cameraman **Evgen Timonin** sentenced in Ukraine to 9 years of prison simply for doing their work.

Dmitro Vasilets and Evgen Timonin were arrested by officers of the Security Service of Ukraine on November 11, 2015, on suspicion of complicity in terrorism and "Betrayal of the Motherland" according to article 111 part 1 of the Ukrainian Criminal Code. The reason for such a charge is that in July 2014 they were for five days in the Donetsk region in order to prepare reports from the area. They also provided their technical knowledge for creation of the internet channels to local journalists who organized the channel "Novorossia TV" based in Donetsk.

Dmitro Vasilets and Evgen Timonin were held in jail for almost two years without sentence. On September 28, 2017 the Andrushevsky Regional Court, Zhytomyr region issued the sentence according to which Dmitro Vasilets and Evgen Timonin have to spend 9 years in prison.

We also call for the immediate release of **Vasil Muravitsky**, the Ukrainian journalist, detained since August 1, 2017 by the Security Service of Ukraine under charges of state treason, infringement of the territorial integrity of Ukraine, incitement of hatred and support for terrorist organizations, as announced by the general prosecutor's press secretary through his Facebook account. Vasil Muravitsky is facing a possible 15 year jail sentence. The NGOs *Reporters without Borders*, based in Paris, and *Committee to Protect Journalists*, based in New York, are appealing for the immediate release of Muravitsky.

Ukraine, as an upcoming candidate country to join the EU is obliged to respect the rights and freedoms as set out in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. However, for the time-being, basic human rights like freedom of expression and association, freedom of thought and conscience, prohibition of torture and other ill-treatments are regularly and brutally violated. Over recent years, a number of popular Ukrainian TV programs have faced administrative and judicial pressure; some of them were forced to close. Numerous reports from international NGOs have

claimed that many journalists criticizing the authorities have faced particularly sophisticated court harassment.

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