

**Question for written answer E-000916/2019
to the Commission EN (Vice-President / High Representative)
Rule 130
Johannes Cornelis van Baalen (ALDE)**

Subject: VP/HR - Deteriorating human rights situation in Russia

Russian and international human rights activists have recently expressed concern that a criminal investigation against the prominent Russian journalist Svetlana Prokopyeva amounts to an infringement of freedom of the press.

They are concerned about the news that on 7 February 2019, the Russian authorities opened a criminal investigation against Ms Prokopyeva following her criticism of the Russian Government in comments about a recent suicide bombing in Arkhangelsk. Since then, the Russian authorities have also fined the radio station and newsfeed websites that reported her comments.

It is also alarming that the Pskov branch of the Yabloko party, the liberal opposition party in Russia, has found itself under criminal investigation by the Russian State for releasing a strong statement of support in defence of the independent journalist.

1. Is the VP/HR aware of this case and what action does she intend to take to defend civil and political rights in Russia?
2. Does the VP/HR intend to raise this case with her Russian counterpart at the G20 Summit in Osaka, which will take place from 28 to 29 June?