

# Press Release

## Parliamentary Assembly – Communication Unit

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## PACE shocked by murder of Natalia Estemirova

Strasbourg, 16.07.2009 - Following the brutal murder of Natalia Estemirova, a highly respected human rights defender and head of the Human Rights Centre “Memorial” in Grozny (Chechnya), the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), Lluís Maria de Puig, and parliamentary rapporteurs (\*) today expressed their shock and dismay, urging the authorities to hold to account not only the direct perpetrators, but also the instigators and organisers of this heinous crime.

“This is one murder of a human rights defender too many - the Russian authorities in Moscow, at the highest level, must at last take decisive action to rein in the lawlessness in Chechnya and the whole North Caucasus region and protect those who stand up for the rights of their fellow citizens, as a matter of national responsibility”, they said.

“Natasha Estemirova was invited only recently to speak before the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights at its next meeting on 11 September 2009, at a hearing on the human rights situation in the region which will focus on the problem of impunity. She will be sorely missed”, they added.

“Mrs Estemirova had been collecting information on serious human rights violations in the region in recent weeks. She has paid with her life for this courageous work”, they concluded.

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(\*) Herta Däubler-Gmelin (Germany, SOC), Chair of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights and rapporteur on [“the need to eradicate impunity”](#) – [Res. 1675\(2009\)](#) – [Rec. 1876\(2009\)](#)

Dick Marty (Switzerland, ALDE), rapporteur on [“legal remedies for human rights violations in the North Caucasus”](#)

Holger Haibach (Germany, EPP/CD), rapporteur on [“the situation of human rights defenders”](#) – [Res. 1660\(2009\)](#) – [Rec 1866\(2009\)](#)

[Chechnya: PACE committee demands full elucidation of the recent spate of murders](#) (27.01.2009)

The Parliamentary Assembly brings together 318 members from the national parliaments of the 47 member states.

President: Lluís Maria de Puig (Spain, SOC) – Secretary General of the Assembly: Mateo Sorinas.

Political groups: EPP/CD (Group of the European People's Party); SOC (Socialist Group); EDG (European Democrat Group);

ALDE (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe); UEL (Group of the Unified European Left).