

Resolution as adopted

Release the “Arctic 30”

Background

On September 18th, 28 activists, a freelance photographer and a freelance videographer, were involved in a protest against the Gazprom Arctic drilling platform Prirazlomnaya. Two of the activists tried to climb the side of the platform to hang a banner. One day later, Russian security services descended from a helicopter onto the deck of the Greenpeace ship Arctic Sunrise, seized the ship at gunpoint and detained the entire crew.

These activists and freelancers are now being held in detention centres in Russia. Although the Russian authorities pledge to drop their initial charge of piracy, all 30 still face accusations of both piracy and hooliganism, which carry a maximum jail sentence of 15- and 7-year respectively.

The ship was seized outside of Russian territorial waters. That arrest in international waters violates the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. But also it sent a signal to the World on how Russia values International Law; Russia also refused to participate and to follow decisions of the International Marine Tribunal in relation to that case (application was filed by the Netherlands – the State of the Arctic Sunrise flag).

The European Green Party Council in Brussels,

1. Notes with deep concern that as global warming causes Arctic ice to vanish at unprecedented rates, oil companies are venturing into ever more northerly waters, prospecting for more of the fossil fuels that are causing the melt in the first place.
2. Stresses that the consequences of an oil spill in these fragile seas, home to rare animals and vital to the livelihoods of indigenous peoples that have lived here for millennia, would be catastrophic.
3. Emphasises that the threats the Arctic faces, demand that urgent action is taken to protect this extraordinary environment.
4. Declares to stand in solidarity with the Arctic 30, the group of Greenpeace activists and two freelance photojournalists detained in Russia without trial after a peaceful protest against Gazprom’s reckless Arctic oil drilling plans.
5. Stresses that the charges of both piracy and hooliganism for this peaceful protest are extreme and disproportionate, and seeks to undermine the efforts of civil society organisations to play their vital role in drawing attention to activities that are against the public interest and damage the environment.
6. Demands the immediate release of all 30 detainees, as well as the Greenpeace International ship “Arctic Sunrise”.
7. Calls on the EU’s Foreign Affairs Council to adopt a common position to this effect, and on the EU’s foreign policy high representative Catherine Ashton and foreign ministers to directly intervene in the matter.