



**Volker Beck**

Member of the German Bundestag  
First Parliamentary Secretary  
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for the Alliance 90/The Greens  
parliamentary group  
in the Bundestag



**Frank Heinrich**

Member of the German Bundestag  
Member of the Committee  
on Human Rights and  
Humanitarian Aid  
CDU/CSU parliamentary group  
in the Bundestag



**Christoph Strässer**

Member of the German Bundestag  
Spokesman on human rights  
for the SPD parliamentary group  
in the Bundestag



**Marina Schuster**

Member of the German Bundestag  
Spokeswoman on human rights  
and humanitarian aid  
for the FDP parliamentary group in  
the Bundestag

7 August 2012

Vladimir M. Grinin  
Ambassador of the Russian Federation  
Embassy of the Russian Federation  
Unter den Linden 63-65  
10117 Berlin

Excellency,

We, the undersigned Members from all of the parliamentary groups in the German Bundestag, are concerned about the circumstances of the criminal proceedings against three members of the band "Pussy Riot".

Maria Alyokhina, Nadezhda Tolokonnikova and Yekaterina Samutsevich have been held in provisional custody for around five months. They are accused of having performed a "punk prayer" in Moscow's Cathedral of Christ the Saviour on 21 February 2012. This is said to have constituted an offence of "organised hooliganism", which carries a penalty of up to seven years' imprisonment. On 20 July 2012, the Khamovniki Court in Moscow extended their provisional custody until 12 January 2013. The three artists facing charges have since apologised to Orthodox Christians for their sensational "punk prayer", saying that it was not their intention to offend anyone's religious beliefs.

The months of provisional custody and the harsh sentence which may be imposed are, in our view, draconian and disproportionate. Especially in view of the fact that artistic acts like the three defendants' "punk prayer" are protected by the freedom of the arts and the right to freedom of expression in accordance with Article 10 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR). The constitution of the Russian Federation protects the freedom of the arts in Article 44 (1): "Everyone shall be guaranteed the freedom of literary, artistic, scientific, technical and other types of creative activity, and teaching." In a secular and pluralist state, peaceful artistic activities – even if they may be seen as a provocation – should not lead to accusations of a serious crime and long prison sentences.

Respectfully yours,

Volker Beck

Frank Heinrich

Christoph Strässer

Marina Schuster

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