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sieć obywatelska

**WATCHDOG**<sup>^</sup>

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AKUL  
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**krytyka  
polityczna**

Warsaw, 8<sup>th</sup> October 2013.

**Conference of Presidents  
European Parliament**

## **Appeal regarding Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought**

Dear Presidents,

We write to you on behalf of 8 Polish non-governmental organizations protecting fundamental rights, including the freedom of expression and information, to lend our support to the selection of Edward Snowden for the Sakharov Prize.

Edward Snowden's recent disclosures have triggered a necessary and long-overdue public debate in the United States about the acceptable boundaries of surveillance in a democratic state and about legitimacy and proportionality of counter-terrorism intelligence activities. The revelations have prompted similar debates in other countries, especially in the European Union.

The Sakharov Prize for freedom of thought was established to recognize individuals actively working to defend human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular the right to freedom of expression. We believe that by his personal example, Snowden meets this criterion. His nomination to the Prize is in itself contributing to the development of democracy and the rule of law in the European Union, in particular with regards to the protection of whistleblowers. Importantly, awarding the Prize to Snowden would give a clear signal to the world that the EU values and protects those who are attacked for speaking out on violations of human rights. We are convinced that Andrei Sakharov, as Daniel Ellsberg and all earlier NSA whistleblowers, would praise Snowden's actions.

Snowden, like Sakharov – nuclear physicist turned enemy of the state – has used his position in national security and defence to raise concerns about the preservation of human rights. In their transition from state apparatchiks to rights advocates, both men became dissidents, persecuted

and maligned by their former masters. It is the moral duty of Europeans to acknowledge a man who has stood up for our basic human rights despite facing personal danger as a consequence.

Snowden's actions represent a challenge to state power at the global level, and thus without regard to conventional and simple national dynamics. If awarded, he would lead the way towards safeguarding activism without borders in a networked world. When deciding about the final candidate of the Sakharov Prize, please remember that Edward Snowden has showed to the Europeans that blanket and unaccountable surveillance is not limited to dictatorships. Please also keep in mind that this is the only thing the European Union can now do to support Edward Snowden.

So far Edward Snowden has neither received due recognition for his courageous deeds nor support from European institutions. As European citizens we believe that the Sakharov Prize would be the best way to change this undesirable situation. Therefore we strongly encourage you to award the Sakharov Prize to Edward Snowden in honour of his courage and commitment to values that the prize represents.

Sincerely yours,

Centrum Cyfrowe: Projekt Polska

Fundacja Nowoczesna Poland

Fundacja Panoptykon

Fundacja Wolnego i Otwartego Oprogramowania

Internet Society Polska

Sieć Obywatelska Watchdog Polska

Stowarzyszenie im. Stanisława Brzozowskiego/Krytyka Polityczna

Wolna Kultura