

Brussels, 26 March, 2015

**Mr Manuel Valls,
Prime Minister of the Republic of France**

Hôtel de Matignon
57, rue de Varenne
75700 Paris, France

Honourable Prime Minister,

As a Member of the European Parliament, Vice Chair of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs and Member of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, I am addressing you to draw your attention to a very worrying case of a Kazakhstani dissident, member of the political opposition and vocal critic of the current Kazakh regime, Mr Mukhtar Ablyazov.

Mr Ablyazov is currently detained in Paris. In a recent decision, the Supreme Court of France upheld the decision of the Court of Appeal in Lyon, by which the Court approved the extradition of Mr Ablyazov from France to both Russia and Ukraine.

Mr Ablyazov has been a vocal critic of the current Kazakh president, Mr Nursultan Nazarbayev, for years now. He started and financed an opposition party, the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan, back in the country, for which he was jailed and faced repressions. The party was then banned and closed. Following numerous threats and repressions, he, his family and co-founders of the party, fled Kazakhstan to Europe, where in 2011 he received a refugee status from the United Kingdom, as well as like his family members and colleagues in Austria, the Czech Republic, Italy, Poland and Spain.

In July 2013 Mr Ablyazov was arrested in France, following a Red Notice issued to the Interpol by Russia and Ukraine, which unite forces with Kazakh authorities in persecution of him. As stated by non-governmental organizations and civil society activists in Kazakhstan, such request was personally issued by the president Nazarbayev to the Russian president Mr Vladimir Putin. As a result, both Russia and Ukraine, subsequently, filed extradition requests to France.

It is evident, given the recent developments in Russia and in Ukraine, that none of the two countries can seriously maintain its weak assurances of safety and fair trial for Mr Ablyazov, should he be extradited. The recent killing of Mr Boris Nemtsov, prominent political

oppositionist in Russia represents yet another proof of such risk. The Ukrainian judicial and penitentiary systems are currently under reform, struggling to overcome the corruptive practices by i.a. the slow speed implementation of the lustration reform.

Taking into account the above, I would like to appeal to you and your Cabinet, when you will consider the decision on whether to issue the extradition decree or not. I believe that Mr Ablyazov as a political oppositionist deserves to be protected by France from certain risks he would face if extradited to Russia or Ukraine.

I thank you in advance for considering this letter and appeal.

Sincerely yours,

CC:

Kenmen D. Yorda 2

Mr François Hollande, President of the Republic of France

Palais de l'Elysée
55, rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré
75008 Paris, France

Ms Christiane Taubira, Minister of Justice of the Republic of France

Ministère de la Justice
13, Place Vendôme
75042 Paris Cedex 01, France

Mr Laurent Fabius, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of France

Ministère des Affaires étrangères et du Développement international
37, Quai d'Orsay
75700 Paris 07SP, France

Brussels, 26 March, 2015

**Mr Viktor Shokin,
General Prosecutor of Ukraine**

13/15 Riznitska str.,
Kyiv, 01011, Ukraine

Honourable Prosecutor General,

As a Member of the European Parliament, Vice Chair of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs and Member of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, I am addressing you to draw your attention to a very worrying case of a Kazakhstani dissident, member of the political opposition and vocal critic of the current Kazakh regime, Mr Mukhtar Ablyazov.

Mr Ablyazov is currently detained in Paris. In a recent decision, the Supreme Court of France upheld the decision of the Court of Appeal in Lyon, by which the Court approved the extradition of Mr Ablyazov from France to both Ukraine and Russia.

Mr Ablyazov has been a vocal critic of the current Kazakh president, Mr Nursultan Nazarbayev, for years now. In the early 2000s, he started and financed an opposition party, the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan, for which he was jailed and faced repressions. The party was then banned and closed. Following numerous threats and repressions, he, his family and co-founders of the party, fled Kazakhstan to Europe, where in 2011 he received a refugee status from the United Kingdom, as well as like his family members and colleagues from Austria, the Czech Republic, Italy, Poland and Spain.

In July 2013 Mr Ablyazov was arrested in France, following a Red Notice issued to the Interpol by Ukraine and Russia. As stated by non-governmental organizations and civil society activists in Kazakhstan, in June 2009 Kazakh president Mr Nursultan Nazarbayev requested his Russian counterpart Mr Vladimir Putin to unite forces in persecution of Mr Ablyazov. After Mr Nazarbayev was promised help, the nationalised BTA Bank, previously managed by Mr Ablyazov, held subsequent meetings with Russian vice-prime minister Mr Igor Shuvalov and mayor of Moscow Mr Sergey Sobyannin. Moreover, the law firm 'Ilyashev and Partners' has represented interests of the BTA Bank in Ukraine since 2009 and lobbied the judicial prosecution of the parties to the case. Kazakh authorities, via this law firm

instigated and financed the preparation of a timely extradition request, which Ukraine and Russia sent to France after Mr Ablyazov's arrest.

Taking into account this worrying information on abuses of your predecessors, during the time of the Ukrainian president Mr Viktor Yanukovich, I would like to appeal to you and your Office to withdraw the extradition request in the case of Mr Ablyazov, as well as to appeal to your Russian counterpart to do the same.

I believe that Mr Ablyazov as a political oppositionist to an authoritarian regime, deserves to be protected from the illegal activities of Kazakh authorities, which are aim to persecute the political opposition abroad with the misuse of judicial systems of democratic countries.

I thank you in advance for considering this letter and appeal.

Sincerely yours,

Kerim D. Umarov

Brussels, 26 March, 2015

**Ms Christiane Taubira,
Minister of Justice of the Republic of France**

Ministère de la Justice
13, Place Vendôme
75042 Paris Cedex 01, France

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It is evident, given the recent developments in Russia and in Ukraine, that none of the two countries can seriously maintain its weak assurances of safety and fair trial for Mr Ablyazov, should he be extradited. The recent killing of Mr Boris Nemtsov, prominent political

oppositionist in Russia represents yet another proof of such risk. The Ukrainian judicial and penitentiary systems are currently under reform, struggling to overcome the corruptive practices by i.a. the slow speed implementation of the lustration reform.

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I thank you in advance for considering this letter and appeal.

Sincerely yours,

Kerim D. G-ba

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