Ms. Iratxe García Pérez

President

Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament

Mr. Sergei Stanišev

President

Party of European Socialists

Bratislava, 31st of August 2022

**RE: Call for the expulsion of the party Smer-SD due to their invitation of the Russian ambassador to the commemoration of the Slovak National Uprising in Slovakia**

**Open letter**

President García Pérez,

President Stanišev,

The Slovak National Uprising was one of the most significant armed insurrections against fascism and authoritarianism during the Second World War in Europe. We commemorated its 78th anniversary on 29 August this year at the time when Slovakia's eastern neighbour Ukraine and its citizens continue to face brutal aggression by the Russian authoritarian regime of Vladimir Putin.

It is therefore most shameful, shocking, and reprehensible that your member party Smer-SD invited the Russian ambassador to Slovakia, Igor Bratčikov, and a representative from the Belarussian embassy in Slovakia to commemorate the uprising in the city of Zvolen together with the leadership of Smer-SD.

While the Russian ambassador has violated the principle of non-interference in internal politics of Slovakia, the political party Smer-SD and its leader Robert Fico, have publicly collaborated with Russia and openly supported the aggressor in the war against Ukraine at the time when Slovakia and other EU member states are on the list of Russian enemies.

The Russian ambassador's invitation to this event clearly demonstrates that Smer-SD does not adhere to the values of democracy and human rights. Instead, it cooperates with representatives of non-democratic, aggressive, and authoritarian regimes.

This is already the second letter this year calling for the expulsion of Smer-SD from the socialist group and socialist party. In March, we warned about the close cooperation between Smer-SD and a fascist political party, Republika, and about Smer-SD's overall radicalization.

Meanwhile, the Republika party helped collect signatures for Smer-SD's petition to call new parliamentary elections. In July, the head of Republika, and a member of the European Parliament, Milan Uhrík, was an official guest of the Smer-SD's so-called celebrations of the Slovak sovereignty in the town of Stará Bystrica.

We also would like to remind you that the head of Smer-SD Robert Fico together with the former Minister of Interior and member of the party, Róbert Kaliňák have since April this year been accused by the National Criminal Agency of their crime of founding, organizing, and supporting a criminal group and abusing public authority in Slovakia.

Dear colleagues, we call on you, again, to reconsider the membership of Smer-SD in the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament and the Party of European Socialists (PES). Smer-SD has proven repeatedly that as a political force it in no way adheres to or represents the values of European social democracy and humanism that your political group and party represent.

Sincerely,



Vladimír Bilčík (EPP/ SPOLU)

Ivan Štefanec (EPP/KDH)

Peter Pollák (EPP/OĽaNO)

Miriam Lexmann (EPP/KDH)

Martin Hojsík (Renew Europe/Progresívne Slovensko)

Michal Šimečka (Renew Europe/Progresívne Slovensko)

Michal Wiezik (Renew Europe/Progresívne Slovensko)

Lucia Ďuriš Nicholsonová (Renew Europe)