

## THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT SAKHAROV PRIZE

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There is one common element, which pervades all great tragedies in human history: the attempt of the few to destroy the freedom of the many, hitting hardest at the freedom of thought, which is at the core of all other forms of freedom.

All big steps in history were realised whenever the struggle for freedom by the many triumphed over totalitarianism by the few. In December 1985, with the wish to support all efforts for freedom of spirit, the European Parliament established a special prize named after Andrei Sakharov, at his consent, while he was still exiled in Gorki. Nelson Mandela, Alexander Dubcek, Aung Sang Suu Kyi of Burma and Les Peres de la Playa of Argentina are among those who have been honoured so far with the Sakharov Prize by the European Parliament.

The esteemed Madame Elena Bonner must remember the emotion and hope she, personally, inspired to all of us in the European Parliament at that time.

According to European Parliament reports, only 50 countries can be considered true democracies. Yet in some of them, new forms of manipulation of human thinking and creativity have already appeared and are threatening freedom.

It is for this reason that the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize has become a permanent tradition, that is as important today as it will be tomorrow. This Congress on "Biopolitics - The Bio-environment - Bio-culture in the Next Millennium," which will provide a working approach to these concepts as elements of realising human freedom, is one of utmost importance, to all of us, both for the present time and future.

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**George Saridakis**, a Greek Supreme Court lawyer, is honorary member of the European Parliament. First elected Euro-Parliamentarian in 1986, he has also been a member of the Mixed Parliamentary Committee, EEC-Turkey, of the Council of the Jean Monnet Institute for Europe (Laussane), Vice-President of the Parliamentary Team of the European Popular Party, Vice President of the Sub-Committee on Monetary Matters of the European Parliament, and a member of the Committee of Agriculture, Fisheries and Open Air Development. In 1993, he received a Recognition of Honour from the Ecumenical Patriarch.