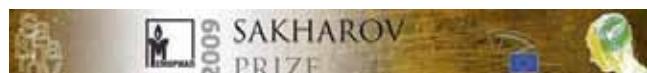
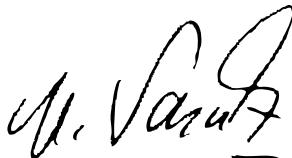


**PASSING ON EXPERIENCE:  
SUPPORTING DEMOCRATISATION  
IN EASTERN EUROPE**

Since joining the European Parliament in June 2009, I have been working to ensure that the positive developments that began in Russia in the 1980s and led to democratic renewal in East Germany and Eastern Europe benefit the country where glasnost and perestroika were born. The period of political freedom did not last long there. When Vladimir Putin came to power, the situation of political dissidents became markedly worse again in today's Russia, with attacks on civil rights, political despotism and acts of violence. Other post-Soviet states such as Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine are also far from establishing stable democratic conditions.

As Vice-Chair of the Delegation to the EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee and member of the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs, I call for more intensive dialogue with these countries on the EU's external border. Here I am drawing on and advised by my own political experience. I know what harm oppression can do, what courage and non-violent opposition can achieve and what we can gain from sympathetic support from the outside. In my view, regular dialogue with representatives of Russian NGOs and opposition groups is just as important as speaking out clearly to representatives of the Russian State Duma and Government.

For more information about my activities, please consult my website and my Newsletter. My team and I are happy to answer any questions and provide information and suggestions.



In 2009, the European Parliament awarded the Sakharov Prize for the Freedom of Thought to Russian civil rights activists, whose candidacy for the prize I championed.

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**MY FUNCTIONS IN THE PARLIAMENT**

- Vice-Chair of the Delegation to the EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee
- Committee on Foreign Affairs
- Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs
- Delegation to the EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Cooperation Committee
- Delegation to the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly

**FURTHER INFORMATION & USEFUL LINKS**

**THE GREENS IN EUROPE**

- Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament [greens-efa.org](http://greens-efa.org)
- German Group of The Greens/EFA [gruene-europa.de](http://gruene-europa.de)
- European Green Party [europeangreens.eu](http://europeangreens.eu)

**EUROPEAN POLITICS**

- Everything about Europe [europa.eu](http://europa.eu)
- Actual about the Parliament [europarl.europa.eu](http://europarl.europa.eu)
- Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) of the European Parliament  
➤ [europarl.europa.eu](http://europarl.europa.eu) (Activities/Committees/AFET)
- The EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee  
➤ [europarl.europa.eu](http://europarl.europa.eu) (Activities/ Europe Delegations /Russia)



The Greens | European Free Alliance  
in the European Parliament

[www.werner-schulz-europa.eu](http://www.werner-schulz-europa.eu)



Photo: Marion Schönberger

**WERNER  
SCHULZ**

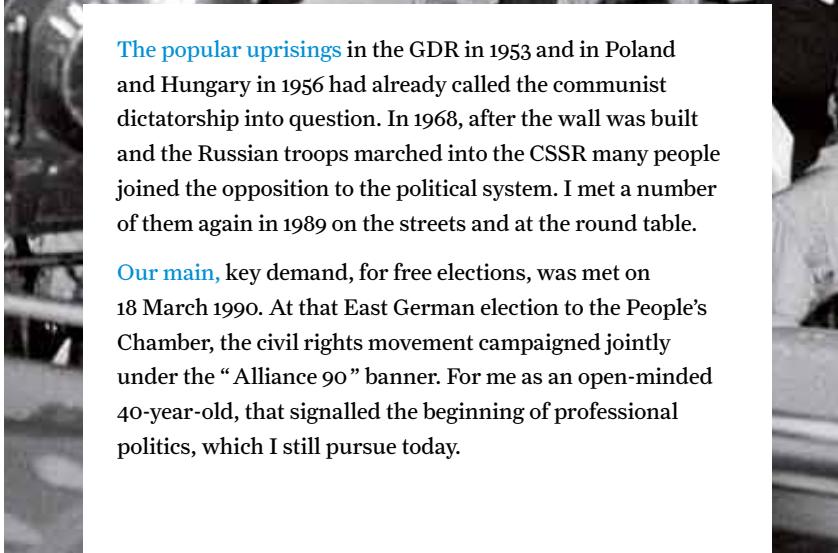
**CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST  
AND MEMBER OF THE  
EUROPEAN PARLAMENT  
ALLIANCE 90/THE  
GREENS, GERMANY**

# “THE LEGACY OF THE PEACEFUL REVOLUTION DOES NOT BELONG IN A MUSEUM. WE REMAIN ‘THE PEOPLE’. THE COURAGE OF 1989 IS STILL NEEDED TODAY.”



## DEAR CITIZENS,

“We are the people” – four words that became the symbol of the Peaceful Revolution of 1989. It was our “Yes we can”. The prelude to an active generation gaining its freedom. The events of those days and weeks have long since found their way into the history books. Yet that certainly does not mean that the calls for more democracy are now history. The mass protests about the Stuttgart 21 rail project, the Gorleben nuclear storage facility and the Schönefeld international airport project show how topical those calls remain today. Co-determination begins with involvement in one’s own affairs. In the GDR it brought an end to incapacitation and oppression and gave structure to the political resolve to attain German unification.



The popular uprisings in the GDR in 1953 and in Poland and Hungary in 1956 had already called the communist dictatorship into question. In 1968, after the wall was built and the Russian troops marched into the CSSR many people joined the opposition to the political system. I met a number of them again in 1989 on the streets and at the round table.

Our main, key demand, for free elections, was met on 18 March 1990. At that East German election to the People's Chamber, the civil rights movement campaigned jointly under the “Alliance 90” banner. For me as an open-minded 40-year-old, that signalled the beginning of professional politics, which I still pursue today.

Werner Schulz, speech at the ceremony marking “20 years of the Peaceful Revolution”, Leipzig, 2009



That first freely elected GDR parliament lasted 180 days, working feverishly on its own dissolution until unification on 3 October 1990. I still think today that we needed more time and should have been prepared for an all-German approach. Then both sides would have been required to make changes, which would have made it possible for an all-German identity to develop.

That also put paid to the great historical opportunity and obligation pursuant to Article 146 of the Basic Law to found a united Germany on a constitution decided by the people. Then the people alone would have had the power to dissolve parliament, rather than a chancellor resorting to a bogus vote of confidence.

Today the call for direct democracy and co-determination remains an unresolved legacy of the Peaceful Revolution. The election of the federal president in summer 2010 made that quite clear. If he had been directly elected by the people, the message of the Peaceful Revolution would finally have been fulfilled 20 years after unification. Much, therefore, remains to be done.