



## PRESS RELEASE

On the occasion of the award of the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize, Frank Schwabe, Chairman of the Group of the Socialists, Democrats and Greens (SOC) in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and rapporteur on North Caucasus said today: *"I congratulate Oyub Titiev, Chairman of the Memorial Human Rights Center in Chechnya, for his tireless fight for human rights in the Chechen Republic. Titiev was appointed head of the Grozny office of Memorial after the assassination of human rights defender and member of the organization Natalia Estemirova in 2009. In January of this year, he was arbitrarily detained for alleged drug possession. The human rights situation in Chechnya has remained unchanged for years. Last year, the persecution, torture and exorcisms of alleged homosexuals has provoked an intense international debate. The award of the Václav Havel Prize to Titiev not only honors an exceptional human rights defender, but also sends a clear political message: Russia must fully comply with its obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights and ensure its implementation in the Chechen Republic, which forms part of the Russian Federation. The freedom of expression, of sexual orientation and political conviction must be guaranteed without limitations and must not be answered with imprisonment."*

Strasbourg, 8<sup>th</sup> October 2018