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Lawmakers Push For 32 Russian Officials to Be on EU Magnitsky List

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EU asset freezes and travel bans should be imposed on 32 Russian officials linked to the death of Hermitage Capital lawyer Sergei Magnitsky, the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee said in a resolution agreed on Tuesday.

The resolution — adopted by 53 votes to one with two abstentions — will have to be passed by the EU Council before any sanctions can come into force, while the recommended list of names first requires approval by the full House at next month's plenary session.

Magnitsky had been charged with tax evasion after accusing Russian officials of stealing $230 million in state funds. Independent investigations have found that his death in pretrial detention in 2009 was caused by severe beatings and the denial of medical attention, and those implicated in his death have been included on the committee's list.

Officials suspected of covering up the events surrounding Magnitsky's death have also been

named on the list, as have those alleged to have continually harassed the lawyer's mother and wife.

Sixteen of the officials named by the committee are already on the U.S. "Magnitsky list" that was introduced by Washington in April 2013.

The Foreign Affairs Committee added an additional 16 people to the EU draft list and recommended that it be regularly revised.

European lawmakers on Tuesday also criticized EU foreign policy head Catherine Ashton for failing to place the issue of Magnitsky sanctions on the Foreign Affairs Council agenda, despite a request from the European Parliament in October 2012.

The Foreign Affairs Committee recommendations come a day after the E.U. and U.S. announced that sanctions were being imposed on Russian and Ukrainian officials responsible for what they believe to be a seizure of power in Ukraine's Crimea region.

President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday signed an agreement to annex Crimea in a move widely condemned by the West and the interim government in Kiev.

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