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EU-Russia relations

Greens/EFA motion for a resolution

Tabled by ***Bart Staes, Joost Lagendijk, Marie Anne Isler Béguin and Milan Horá?ek***

on behalf of the Greens/EFA Group

The European Parliament,

 having regard to its previous resolutions on Russia, in particular its resolution of 19 January 2006,

 having regard to its resolution of 26 May 2005 on EU-Russia relations,

 having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EC and Russia which entered into force on 1 December 1997,

 having regard to the Commission/SG/HR Paper for the European Council on 'An external policy to serve Europe's energy interests',

 having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the EU-Russia summit which was held in Sochi on 25 May 2006 was dominated by the issue of energy, with each side expressing its willingness to accede to have access to the other's market but with no agreement reached,

B. noting that a stable, reciprocal and transparent EU-Russia energy framework for gas and oil is important for both sides,

C. recognizing that the development of energy saving and energy efficiency would promote energy security and energy justice and reduce the dramatic impact of climate change and other risks,

D. whereas both sides reviewed the progress made to date in the implementation of the four 'common spaces',

E. whereas last winter's energy crisis with Ukraine undermined the credibility of Russia as a reliable energy supplier for Europe,

F. pointing out that the present Partnership and Cooperation Agreement will expire in 2007 and that negotiations will soon start on a new, more ambitious agreement which would be used as a framework for a genuine strategic partnership,

G. highlighting the fact that such a partnership can only be built on shared common values of which democracy, respect for the rule of law and human rights must represent the core,

H. stressing that the EU-Russia human rights consultation dialogue has brought about no substantial progress in this field, which should be a priority as regards EU-Russia relations,

I. whereas since May 2006 the Russian Federation has held the rotating chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe; whereas the first priority of Russia for its chairmanship, as presented by its Foreign Minister Lavrov, is 'Reinforcing national human rights protection mechanisms, development of human rights education and rights of national minorities',

L. whereas the G8 will for the first time gather in Russia as a reward for Russia's moves towards democracy, but unfortunately recent history has shown a reversal in Russia's democratic progress and an obvious gap between the values of Russia and the G7 members,

M. deeply concerned about the recent law on NGOs that has increased government control over civil society organisations, and exposed non-profit organisations to political pressure, and about the fact that Russia's main television channels are state-controlled and several major newspapers are owned by individuals friendly to the Kremlin, thus restricting further the country's democratic space,

N. whereas in recent Russian history opponents have been silenced with criminal charges and put into prisons which do not fulfil human rights standards,

1. Supports the efforts to integrate EU and Russian energy markets in a mutually beneficial, reciprocal, transparent and non-discriminatory manner;

2. Calls therefore on the Council, the Commission and Russia to make every political and financial effort on issues such as energy savings and renewables, where Russia has enormous potential and where EU businesses often have the appropriate technology and financial skills to turn that potential into reality;

3. Is of the opinion that guaranteeing reliable competitive access by all Member States and Russia to renewable energy, materials, equipment and technologies will make those countries comply with their employment, environmental and energy security obligations;

4. Expresses its deep concern at the lower environmental and public consultation standards in Russia as regards radioactive waste and spent-fuels management; rejects the notion of Russia becoming the nuclear dustbin of Europe; asks therefore that the practice of exporting other hazardous material for disposal in third countries, which is prohibited under international law, be extended by the EU to cover all nuclear wastes and spent fuel and to all third countries; highlights the fact, furthermore, that transportation of nuclear waste poses serious environmental, health and safety risks;

5. Welcomes the signing, on the fringes of the summit, of the agreements on readmission and on visa facilitation, which will allow students, journalists, businessmen, academics and athletes to be able to use this simplified regime for receiving visas, thus increasing exchanges with the EU;

6. Takes the view, though, that the strategic partnership with Russia is turning out to be more than ever a pragmatic partnership, since democracy, human rights and the rule of law are not at this stage shared common values;

7. Expresses, in this regard, its concern at the further deterioration of democracy in Russia over the last few years, in particular on account of the increased political control of the judiciary as well as of the economy, as exemplified by the dismantling of Yukos and the trials of Mr Khodokovsky and Mr Lebedev;

8. Calls on the incoming Finnish and German Presidencies to make every effort to give the EU-Russia human rights dialogue a higher role - especially now since Russia holds the presidency of the Council of Europe and is hosting the G8 summit - and to further involve the European Parliament in this process;

9. Takes note of the declaration of the Austrian Presidency on the outcome of the EU-Russia consultation on human rights which took place in March 2006; welcomes, in this regard, the decision of the Austrian Presidency to launch inquiries into cases of disappearances and torture in Chechnya; fully supports the participation of the EU Presidency in a meeting organised by international and Russian NGOs prior to the consultation and calls for the involvement of the European Parliament in such meetings;

10. Takes the view that the road map for the implementation of the four common spaces should develop alongside concrete progress in the field of democracy and human rights;

11. Calls on the Council, for its part, to address the issue of the Russian-speaking population in the Baltic States so as to fully guarantee their minority rights;

12. Regrets that as regards the Common Space on External Security no progress was made on conflict resolution in Transnistria and South Caucasus, with no real improvement in Chechnya and no willingness by the Russian side to engage with Belarus so as to start a genuine process of democratisation in that country;

13. Calls on the present and forthcoming presidencies to set up a framework for a dialogue between all the components of society in both the EU and Russia with a view to helping to define the future agreement which will replace the present PCA;

14. Urges the Russian Federation as a member of the Council of Europe to improve conditions for prisoners and put an end to difficulties for lawyers to have access to prisoners; points out that, according to the Russian Criminal Code, detainees should be imprisoned either close to their residence or close to where their trial took place, as exemplified by the prisoners Mr Khodokovsky and Mr Lebedev;

15. Calls on the Russian authorities to cease politically motivated harassment of convicts and protect their lives in prison, especially in physical and psychological terms, as exemplified by the prisoners Mr Khodorkovsky, who was attacked in his cell, and Mr Lebedev, who is very ill and does not have access to independent medical check-ups;

16. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission and to the Duma, Government and President of Russia.

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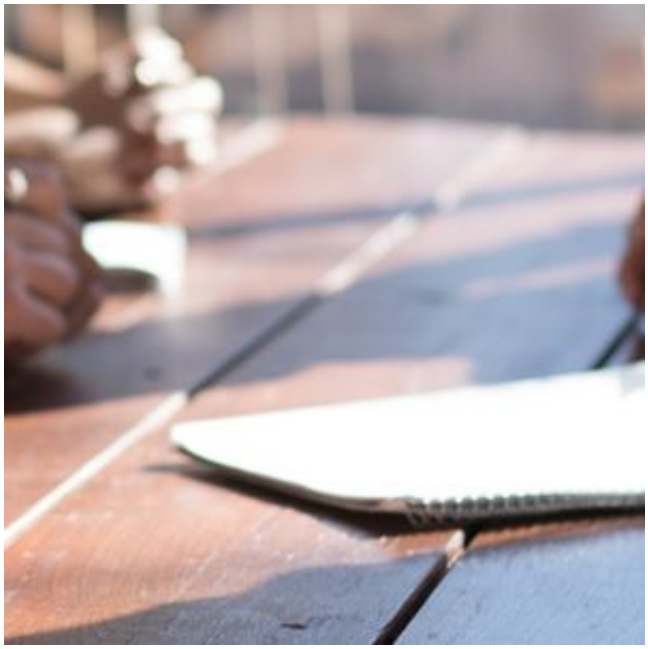
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