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# Kazakhstan

## Greens/EFA motion for a resolution

*The European Parliament*,

– having regard to its previous resolutions on Kazakhstan with regard, in particular, to the one of 17 September 2009,

– having regard to its resolution on a EU Strategy for Central Asia of 15 December 2011,

– having regard to the EU Strategy for Central Asia,

– having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EC and Kazakhstan that entered into force in 1999,

– having regard to the Statement by EU HR/VP Catherine Ashton on the events in the Zhanaozen district of 17 December 2011,

– having regard to the preliminary report of the OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission of 28 January 2011,

– having regard to the Statement by EU HR/VP Catherine Ashton on parliamentary elections in Kazakhstan of 17 December 2011,

– having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the EU and Kazakhstan are negotiating a new ambitious agreement that should replace the expired PCA and is aimed at enhancing and deepening relations between the two parties;

B. whereas on 16 December 2011, on the occasion of Kazakhstan's independence day, in the city of Zhanaozen, in the province of Mangistau, more than 3 000 people rallied on the main square in support of the demands of oil workers on strike since May for higher wages and better conditions;

C. whereas the riot police attacked the protesters opening fire on civilians including unarmed strikers and their families causing the death of at least 16 people according to official reports but many more according to independent sources with as many as 500 people hundred;

D. whereas after the clashes the Kazakh authorities declared the state of emergency restricting journalists and independent observers from having unfettered access to Zhanaozen; whereas the state of emergency was prolonged and finally lifted on 31 January;

E. whereas on 8 August 2011 the Aktau City Court had found Natalia Sokolova, oil workers' lawyer who spoke to workers about wage disparity, guilty on charges of 'inciting social discord' and 'active participation in illegal gatherings' and sentenced her to 6 years in prison for stirring up social conflict;

F. whereas the President of Kazakhstan called for a full investigation of the events establishing a government commission headed by the first deputy prime minister and inviting international experts to participate in the investigation process, including from the UN; whereas several police officers are under investigation for inappropriately firing their weapons although none of them have been charged so far;

G. whereas human rights groups and media reported allegations of ill-treatment and torture of detainees during interrogations of detainees following the clashes, including the death of Bazarbai Kenzhebaev, who died of a ruptured intestine following beatings apparently sustained in custody;

H. whereas more than 40 local citizens face trial in the regional capital Aktau for their alleged involvement in the deadly riots;

I. whereas on 6 January the President of Kazakhstan signed the Law on National Security that boosts the authority of the security services and affirms that persons considered to harm the country's image on the world stage can be deemed 'destructive' and are subject to repercussions;

J. whereas defamation remains criminalised and whereas the law on the Introduction of Changes and Additions to the legislation about Informational-Communicative networks of 10 July 2009, equates internet resources (websites, chat rooms, blogs, discussion forums) with mass media outlets and made them and their owners liable for the same offences;

K. whereas in September 2011 the authorities adopted a law on religion which obliges all religious groups to re-register, and includes provisions that prohibit citizens of Kazakhstan to freely practice their faith;

L. whereas the general elections that took place on 16 January 2012 were deemed by the OSCE not in line with OSCE standards with widespread voting irregularities and the use of state resources and slogans to bolster the popularity of the party in government, which did not provide the necessary conditions for the conduct of genuinely pluralistic elections although this time the elections were well administered at technical level;

M. whereas, on 23 January members of the National Security Committee (KNB) raided offices of the unregistered opposition party Alga in Almaty and searched the apartments of key party members as well as the premises of the opposition newspaper Vzglyad; whereas Alga party leader Vladimir Kozlov and civil society activist Serik Sapargaly were arrested on charges of inciting social unrest and editor-in-chief Igor Vinyavski arrested on charges of calling for the violent overthrow and change of the constitutional order by force and violation of the unity of the Republic of Kazakhstan; whereas, on 6 January Alga party member Aizhangul Amirova was arrested on charges of inciting social unrest; and whereas two other opposition activists, Bolat Atabaev and Zhanbolat Mamai, also face charges of inciting social unrest;

N. whereas on 2 February police raided the office of the opposition paper 'Golos Republik' confiscating a printer and other computer equipment and the KNB summoned twice for questioning the Deputy Editor Oksana Makushina;

O. whereas on 28 January around 1000 people in Almaty took part in an unauthorised protest against the

repression and calling on the authorities to put an end to political persecution; whereas the authorities subsequently sentenced to short-term administrative detention three Azat Social Democratic Party leaders for organising the protest and fined others who participated;

P. whereas on 25 February, on the occasion of another unauthorized rally in Almaty to protest repression, including the killings in Zhanaozen, authorities detained three Azat Social Democratic Party leaders in advance of the rally, preventing them from attending and later sentenced two to 15 day administrative sentences; whereas hundreds of police officers patrolled the peaceful protest; whereas at least a dozen other individuals were fined for active participation in the protest;

Q. whereas Kazakhstan took the chairmanship of the OSCE in 2010 and committed to the series of democratic reforms and to respect the basic principles of this organisation;

1. Strongly condemns the violent crackdown by the police forces on demonstrators in Zhanaozen and calls for independent, transparent, impartial and credible international investigation of the events including into allegations of excessive use of force by police and of ill-treatment and torture of detainees;

2. Underlines that progress in negotiations of the new agreement must depend on progress of political reforms with regard, in particular, to the respect for human rights, the rule of law and democratic freedoms;

3. Takes note of the announced willingness of the Kazakh government to address the legitimate requests of the oil workers and calls on them to concretely follow suit, start a meaningful social dialogue, deal properly with labour issues and desist from targeting oil workers in retribution for participating in strikes in 2011 and expresses in this respect, its concern at the arrests of oil workers, including Talgat Saktaganov, Rosa Tuletaeva, Maksat Dosmugambetov, Natalia Azhigalieva, Aiman Ungarbaeva, and Zhanar Saktaganova and Akhzanat Animov in connection with the clashes with police on 16 December;

4. Calls on the EEAS to follow closely and monitor the trial of those accused of organising the demonstrations and report back to the European Parliament;

5. Deplores the ongoing crackdown on media and freedom of expression, and calls on the government of Kazakhstan to loosen its control on electronic media;

6. Deplores the ongoing crackdown on opposition parties and its leaders and calls on the authorities to abide by the principles and commitments of the OSCE guaranteeing freedom of speech and freedom of assembly;

7. Calls for the immediate release of lawyer Natalia Sokolova and Akhzhanat Aminov; Vladimir Kozlov, the leader of the ‘Alga!’ opposition party, Igor Vinyavskiy, editor of Vzglyad newspaper, social activists Serik Sapargaly, Ruslan Simbinov and Aizhangul Amirova;

8. Urges the Kazakh authorities to allow international human rights observers and local civil society organisations unfettered access to Western Kazakhstan and to engage in independent monitoring from the ground;

9. Calls on Kazakh government to address in full all the shortfalls and deficiencies highlighted by the OSCE/ODIHR observation mission in its preliminary report on the 16 January elections;

10. Welcomes the release of Evgeny Zhovtis, director of Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and the Rule of Law, and ‘Vremya’ journalist Tokhniyaz and calls for the release of all political prisoners;

11. Calls on the External Action Service to raise these concerns in the context of ongoing negotiations of an enhanced agreement and to find ways to monitor the situation on the basis of international human rights and civil society groups and report regularly to the European Parliament;

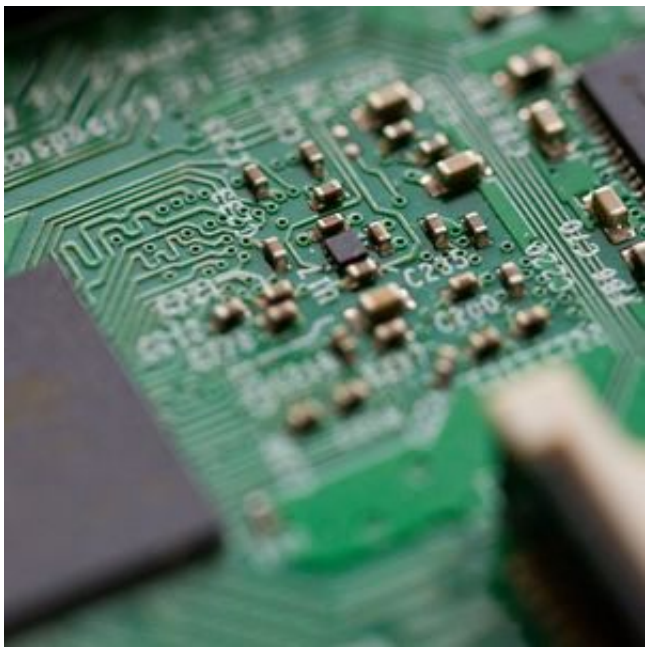
12. Takes the view that the finalisation of an enhanced cooperation agreement should be linked to the release of political prisoners detained in connection with Zhanaozen events, and the launching of a dialogue on reconciliation to address underlying concerns;

13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the HR/VP, the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Government and Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

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