



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Plenary sitting

7.3.2012

B7-0142/2012

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 110(2) of the Rules of Procedure
on Kazakhstan (2012/2553(RSP))

Liisa Jaakonsaari, Ana Gomes
on behalf of the S&D Group

RE\895025EN.doc

PE483.193v01-00

EN

United in diversity

EN

European Parliament resolution on Kazakhstan (2012/2553(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the general provisions on the Union's external action laid down in article 21 of the Treaty on European Union, and the procedure for the conclusion of international agreements set out in article 218 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
 - 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, and in particular its article 2 in the General principles section,
 - having regard to the Council Conclusions on Kazakhstan of 24 May 2011,
 - having regard to the EU's statements on Kazakhstan in the OSCE Permanent Council of 3 November and 22 December 2011, 19 January, 26 January and 9 February 2012 and to the statements by EU HR/VP Catherine Ashton on the events in the Zhanaozen district of 17 December 2011 and on the 15 January 2012 parliamentary elections in Kazakhstan of 17 January 2012,
 - having regard to the statement of preliminary findings and conclusions of the OSCE/ODIHR-led mission observing the 15 January 2012 parliamentary elections,
 - having regard to the statement on the media situation in Kazakhstan by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media of 25 January 2012,
 - having regard to the statement on the clampdown on Kazakh opposition by the Director of the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of 1 February 2012,
 - having regard to its resolution on the EU Strategy for Central Asia of 15 December 2011, in particular the paragraphs 64-68 on Kazakhstan thereof,
 - having regard to paragraph 23 of its resolution on the United Nation's Human Rights Council of 16 February 2012,
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas both the EU and Kazakhstan could derive important benefits from deeper cooperation and the European Parliament supports this objective, while stressing that economic cooperation must go hand in hand with political cooperation and be based on the political will to implement and uphold common values;
- B. whereas negotiations on a new enhanced EU-Kazakhstan agreement, which should replace the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement currently in force, were launched in June

2011;

- C. whereas on 16 December 2011, a high number of persons were killed and many more still were wounded during unrest in the city of Zhanaozen in western Kazakhstan; whereas the authorities report that 17 people died, but witnesses to events have claimed that the death toll must have been far higher;
- D. whereas oil workers in the region had gone on strike for better salaries and working conditions half a year earlier, but mass dismissals had instead followed and put many families' in great difficulties to secure their livelihood; whereas trade union activities had been harshly repressed, frustration and anger had risen and manifestations on 16 December were followed by violence which included firing by security forces on fleeing, seemingly unarmed demonstrators, as documented in a video-clip posted on the YouTube website and embedded in news reports in authoritative media;
- E. whereas the picture of what actually happened in Zhanaozen on 16 December 2011 remains hazy; whereas communication links were initially cut by the authorities and access to the city then remained controlled under a state of emergency which lasted until 31 January 2012; whereas intimidation and violent attacks against independent media, together with a climate of fear among the citizens, keep hindering the emergence of greater clarity;
- F. whereas accountability for shootings and other violent actions must be established; whereas investigations by the authorities alone will not be sufficient for creating trust and the authorities have declared themselves open to let international actors assume functions, but issued no official invitation;
- G. whereas there are several reports that detainees have been subjected to torture and ill-treatment; whereas credible investigation, followed by appropriate legal action, is necessary also in relation to this;
- H. whereas a marked deterioration of the human rights situation in Kazakhstan had begun long before the mid-December events and now continues, as reflected in the EU's statements in the OSCE Permanent Council and in recent statements by the OSCE Representative on freedom of the Media and by the Director of the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights;
- I. whereas recently adopted laws on religion, mass media and national security all include provisions which strengthen illiberal features of Kazakhstan's political system and contradict declared democratisation ambitions;
- J. whereas on 8 August 2011, the Aktau City Court found Natalia Sokolova, lawyer of the oil workers, guilty of “inciting social discord” and “active participation in illegal gatherings” and sentenced her to 6 years imprisonment;
- K. whereas OSCE/ODIHR-led international election observers found that the 15 January 2012 parliamentary elections did not meet fundamental principles of democratic elections;
- L. whereas during the last two months, the opposition parties Alga and Azat and independent

media, including the Vzglyad, Golos Republik and Respublika newspapers and the Stan TV, have become targets of intensified repression, with the detention inter alia of the leader of the Alga party Vladimir Kozlov and the editor-in-chief of Vzglyad Igor Vinyavski;

- M. whereas the fact that Mr Kozlov was arrested shortly after his return from meetings in the European Parliament and the European External Action Service gives the EU additional reason for concern and highlights the importance of safeguarding our institutions' ability to conduct dialogues with a broad range of actors in the EU's partner countries without this having any negative consequence for our interlocutors;
1. Expresses its deep condolences to the relatives of those killed and those gone missing during the mid-December 2011 events in the Mangistau province in western Kazakhstan;
 2. Condemns the violence in Zhanaozen, which inter alia took the shape of security forces firing on demonstrators; stresses the importance of establishing accountability for these acts and of openness and transparency of all court cases;
 3. Calls for an independent, international investigation of the events;
 4. Declares its intention to continue to conduct dialogues with civil society actors, as part of its relations with Kazakhstan, in line with its practices in its relations with other third countries; expects respect for these dialogues and points out that it is not insensitive to the well-being of its interlocutors;
 5. Believes that bad handling of the labour dispute in the oil sector in western Kazakhstan was the main cause of the deepening popular discontent before the mid-December 2011 events; is convinced that recognition, in words and in deeds, of workers' right to organise, mutually respectful dialogue between trade union representatives, employers and authorities, re-hiring of dismissed workers or new jobs for them, support for families suffering badly from consequences of recent events and the building of trust in the law-enforcement authorities are key to the achievement of social peace and sustainable stability;
 6. Welcomes the recent release of the human rights defender Evgeniy Zhovtis;
 7. Regrets that there are otherwise few exceptions from the negative trend in human rights related developments in Kazakhstan which has existed for a considerable time and has recently been reinforced;
 8. Urges the Kazakh authorities to halt and reverse the negative trend in human rights; underlines that progress in negotiations of the new enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Kazakhstan must depend on progress of political reforms;
 9. Calls on the Kazakh authorities to end the clampdown on the political opposition and independent media in the country and release all persons incarcerated on seemingly politically motivated grounds, including the leader of the Alga party Vladimir Kozlov, the editor-in-chief of the Vzglyad newspaper Igor Vinyavskiy and the lawyer of the striking oil workers Natalia Sokolova, as well as all persons mentioned in recent EU statements in

the OSCE Permanent Council remaining in detention;

10. Urges the Kazakh authorities to rapidly improve the respect for the freedoms of assembly, association, expression and religion, drawing on recommendations from OSCE representatives and bodies and paying great attention to the international commitments Kazakhstan has entered into, as well as to the promises made before the decision to give Kazakhstan the OSCE Chairmanship in 2010 was taken; draws attention to the well-prepared National Human Rights Action Plan adopted in 2009 and urges the Kazakh authorities to fully implement it;
11. Is convinced that Kazakhstan's authorities and society would reap huge benefits from taking such action, not least in terms of stability, security and a return to a steady rise in the country's international standing;
12. Expresses the hope that an unequivocally positive trend in Kazakhstan's social development will swiftly be established and stands ready to offer firm support once this has happened;
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.