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Plenary sitting

11.6.2013

B7-0269/2013

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 122 of the Rules of Procedure

on the Rule of law in Russia
(2013/2667(RSP))

**Véronique De Keyser, Libor Rouček, Liisa Jaakonsaari, Joanna Senyszyn,
Ana Gomes, Richard Howitt**
on behalf of the S&D Group

**European Parliament resolution on the Rule of law in Russia
(2013/2667(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the ongoing negotiations for a new agreement providing a new comprehensive framework for EU-Russia relations, as well as to the ‘Partnership for Modernisation’ initiated in 2010,
 - having regard to its previous reports and resolutions on Russia, in particular its resolutions of 12 September 2012 on the political use of justice in Russia, 16 February 2012¹ on the upcoming presidential election in Russia, of 14 December 2011² on the State Duma election and of 7 July 2011³ on preparations for the Russian State Duma elections in December 2011,
 - having regard to the Statement following the EU-Russian Federation human rights consultations (19 May 2013),
 - having regard to the works of the EU-Russia Summit (3-4 June 2013),
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the European Union remains committed to further deepening and developing the relations between EU and Russia, which is shown by the Union’s commitment to seriously engage in negotiating a new framework agreement for the further development of EU-Russia relations and whereas the European Union and Russia have established deep and comprehensive relations, particularly in the energy, economic and business sectors and have become mutually interdependent in the global economy;
- B. whereas there remains concern about developments in the Russian Federation with regard to respect for and the protection of human rights and respect for commonly agreed democratic principles, rules and procedures; whereas the Russian Federation is a full member of the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and has therefore committed itself to the principles of democracy and respect for human rights;
- C. whereas the Russian Parliament adopted a bill in July 2012 granting the status of a ‘foreign agent’ to Russian non-commercial organisations engaged in political activities and financed from abroad; whereas the last year NGO legislation and the legislation on the rights to freedom of assembly are used to suppress civil society, stifle opposing political views and harass NGOs, democratic opposition and media;
- D. whereas the deaths of Ana Politkovskaya and Sergei Magnitsky remain unaccounted for;

¹ Text adopted, P7_TA(2012)0054

² Text adopted, P7_TA(2011)0575.

³ Text adopted, P7_TA(2011)0335.

- E. whereas federal authorities have done nothing to stop discriminatory legislation banning "homosexual propaganda" from coming into effect in nine regions of Russia, and analogous draft law is awaiting consideration by the State Duma.
1. Reaffirms its belief that Russia remains one of European Union's most important partners in building strategic cooperation, sharing not only economic and trade interests but also political and social values;
 2. Reaffirms its disappointment with the bill granting the status of 'foreign agent' to Russian non-commercial organisations engaged in political activities and financed from abroad, now becoming obvious the serious negative consequences resulting from the implementation of this law;
 3. Expresses its disappointment that since the end of March 2013, more than one hundred inspections of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been launched in at least 13 regions of the Russian Federation, including Krasnodar, Moscow, Orenburg, Penza, Perm and Altai territories, St. Petersburg, Primorsky, Saratov and Rostov provinces; deeply regrets that few NGOs are already facing trial, like Memorial in St Petersburg, or have already been sentenced, like GOLOS; is concerned by the investigations launched against international non-governmental organizations that work toward building democracy in Russia, including the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, and the recent case of administrative harassment of their Moscow offices; calls on Russian authorities to put an end to the campaign of State-sponsored harassment and end the rhetoric aimed at stigmatizing NGOs and creating a hostile atmosphere for civil society;
 4. Urges Russia to repeal the laws that contain provisions inconsistent with Russia's international and constitutional commitments on human rights, such as provisions of the "foreign agents" law requiring organisations that accept foreign funding and engage in "political activities" to register as "foreign agents", the amendment to article 151 of the Criminal Code broadening the definition of treason, provisions of Law No. 272-FZ (the "Dima Yakovlev law") that allow for the suspension of nongovernmental organizations and the freezing of their assets and Article 128.1 of the Criminal Code, reinstating criminal responsibility for libel;
 5. Calls on Russia to cooperate fully with the special procedures of the United Nations Human Rights Council, including by issuing a standing invitation for country visits and responding positively to pending requests for access by the UN Special Rapporteurs on the protection of human rights defenders, on freedom of association and assembly, and on freedom of expression to Russia; Calls on Russia to also accept recommendations, made in the context of the Universal Periodic Review of Russia at the Human Rights Council, to repeal or revise legislation affecting the work of NGOs and to stop obstructing human rights work.
 6. Calls on Russia to guarantee free and safe environment to allow the opposition, civil

society, journalists and human rights defenders to conduct their legitimate activities; recalls that, under international law, States have an obligation to support, directly or indirectly, the funding of civil society activities, in particular by creating a favourable environment, without interfering in their independence;

7. Expresses its concern that the case of lawyer Sergei Magnitsky, who died in custody more than three years ago, has been closed without anyone being held responsible for his death, while the victim is actually prosecuted, posthumously; welcomes the recent re-opening of the process in the case of the murder of Anna Politkovskaya, more than 6 years after she was shut, but shares the concern that the question of who ordered the murder is unlikely to emerge from the case.
8. Expresses its disappointment with the last year verdict concerning the members of the punk group Pussy Riot; notes with concern that this case adds to the recent upsurge in politically motivated intimidation and prosecution of opposition activists in the Russian Federation, a trend that is of growing concern to the European Union; expresses its concern with the apparent political union between the Russian state government and the Russian Orthodox Church; calls on Russia to immediately and unconditionally release Pussy Riot group members Maria Alyokhina and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova;
9. Calls on Russia to refrain from adopting a federal legislation on "homosexual propaganda", which could increase discrimination and violence against LGBTI individuals.
10. Calls on the Council to adopt EU Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on human rights in Russia which would serve to provide critical support to all those in Russia working to protect human rights and would also serve to bind the 27 EU Member States and EU institutions to a common message and approach with regards to human rights in Russia;
11. Underlines the importance of the continuous exchange of views on human rights with Russia within the EU-Russia Human Rights Consultations as a way to consolidate our interoperability in all the fields of cooperation and demands an improvement in the format of these meetings in order to gain effectiveness, with special attention for common action against racism and xenophobia and to open this process to an effective input from the European Parliament, the State Duma and the human rights NGOs, whether the dialogue takes place in Russia or in an EU Member State;
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Government and Parliament of the Russian Federation, the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.