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Plenary sitting

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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 123(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the murder of the Russian opposition leader Boris Nemtsov and the state of democracy in Russia
(2015/2592(RSP))

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on behalf of the ALDE Group

**European Parliament resolution on the murder of the Russian opposition leader Boris Nemtsov and the state of democracy in Russia
(2015/2592(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions and recommendations on Russia, in particular its recommendation of 23 October 2012 to the Council on establishing common visa restrictions for Russian officials involved in the Sergei Magnitsky case¹, its resolutions of 13 June 2013 on the rule of law in Russia², of 13 March 2014 on Russia: sentencing of demonstrators involved in the Bolotnaya Square events³, and of 23 October 2014 on the closing-down of the NGO ‘Memorial’ (winner of the 2009 Sakharov Prize) in Russia⁴, its recommendation to the Council of 2 April 2014 on establishing common visa restrictions for Russian officials involved in the Sergei Magnitsky case⁵, and its resolution of 15 January 2015 on Russia, in particular the case of Alexei Navalny⁶,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Ukraine, in particular that of 15 January 2015⁷,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on the European Neighbourhood Policy and on the Eastern Partnership (EaP),
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas respect for independence, territorial integrity, inviolability of borders and the peaceful resolution of disputes are key principles Russia is committed to respect by its ratification of the UN Charter and the CSCE Helsinki Final Act; whereas the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law are the key commitments related to Russia’s membership of the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the UN;
- B. whereas Russia’s annexation of Crimea and its military intervention and support for the separatists in eastern Ukraine violate international law, including the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and the 1994 Budapest Agreement; whereas these actions constitute a threat not only to the unity and independence of Ukraine but to the whole European continent;
- C. whereas Parliament has expressed its concern on numerous occasions over the state of democracy in Russia, and the systematic failure to uphold the rule of law and respect fundamental rights; whereas the rule of law, fair trial standards, due process and the

¹ OJ C 68E, 7.3.2014, p. 13.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0284.

³ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0253.

⁴ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2014)0039.

⁵ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0258.

⁶ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0006.

⁷ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0011.

independence of the judiciary are not respected in Russia; whereas the last presidential and State Duma elections failed to meet OSCE standards;

- D. whereas the lack of media freedom makes it very difficult for Russian people to have access to information that is not effectively propaganda for government policies, including outside of Russia;
 - E. whereas the EU has repeatedly offered assistance and expertise to Russia, through the Partnership for Modernisation, to strengthen the rule of law, meet its international obligations and develop its full economic potential;
 - F. whereas the EU opened negotiations with Russia on a new EU-Russia agreement, which would have put the bilateral partnership on a new footing; whereas these negotiations have been suspended in response to Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and continuing destabilisation of Ukraine;
 - G. whereas Russian military forces are present on the internationally recognised territory of Georgia and Moldova, in violation of international law;
1. Deplores the murder of Boris Nemtsov, former deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation and a leading politician of the opposition movement RPR-Parnas, expresses its condolences to his family and loved ones and calls for an independent inquiry to bring the perpetrators to justice;
 2. Points out that his killing is among a growing number of unresolved politically motivated murders and suspicious deaths perpetrated in Russia since 1998, which include those of investigative journalist Anna Politkovskaia, lawyer Stanislav Markelov, journalist Anastasiia Baburova, human rights defender Natalia Estemirova, lawyer Sergei Magnitskii, and now politician Boris Nemtsov;
 3. Is alarmed by the atmosphere of hatred directed against opposition activists, human rights defenders, minorities and neighbouring nations, which has been growing in Russia in recent years, instigated by state propaganda and official media as part of a political culture that distances itself from democratic principles;
 4. Is deeply concerned by the systematic deterioration of the situation of human rights and of the rule of law in Russia as a result of the efforts of state authorities to silence free speech, obstruct opposition activities, react with repression to any activity aimed at exposing corruption among the political and economic elite and stifle the activities of civil society; condemns the intimidation of critical voices through violence, trials, imprisonments and other measures used by the state, and the restrictions on press freedom and internet freedom;
 5. Regrets the fact that the Russian judicial system is being misused as a power instrument which covers up politically motivated arrests, trials and imprisonments with a notion of legality, and covers up the impunity of those in power;
 6. Expresses its concern over the serious economic downturn in Russia, which is mainly due to the falling energy prices and the opaque investment environment, which is

burdened by corruption and distorted in order to work for the interests of the Russian political elite, but also aggravated by the economic sanctions imposed on Russia;

7. Reminds Russia of its obligations as a Member of the Council of Europe;
8. Strongly condemns the illegal occupation and annexation of Crimea and the substantiated Russian involvement in the fighting in the eastern part of Ukraine; urges Russia to accept that it is a party to the conflict and to fully implement the Minsk II agreement, including the full withdrawal of its military assets and forces from Ukrainian territory and the complete cessation of military support and provision of supplies to the separatists;
9. Takes note of the partial exchange of prisoners of war and calls upon both sides to release, as agreed in Minsk, all prisoners, including Nadiia Savchenko, who are being held by the Russian authorities in prison in Moscow;
10. Encourages a more active EU role in the OSCE; calls for a more robust mandate for OSCE monitors in eastern Ukraine to oversee implementation of the Minsk agreements, including the full control of the Russian-Ukrainian border, and expects all Member States to fulfil their commitments to man and equip the OSCE mission so that it can carry out its tasks;
11. Warns Russia against carrying out further destabilising activities against its neighbours, points out Russia's stated commitment to seek peaceful settlement of disputes, and encourages Russia to assume an active, constructive role in common European organisations, including the OSCE and the Council of Europe; reiterates its commitment to the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states in Europe and insists on their right to freely choose their alliances;
12. Urges the President of the European Council and the Vice-President / High Representative (VP/HR) to come up with a comprehensive policy strategy which would enable the EU to regain the initiative and pursue a proactive policy towards Russia;
13. Is of the view that this EU strategy should be aimed at getting Russia to fully respect the OSCE principles and at motivating its leadership to move Russia out of its political and economic self-isolation; considers that this strategy needs to be based on a two-track approach: a strategy to contain challenges from the current Russian policy of confrontation and, at the same time, a strategy of deeper engagement with the Russian population and civil society, with a stronger emphasis on the human rights of the people in Russia;
14. Believes that Russia remains an important global player and that it is in the EU's and Russia's strategic interest to swiftly de-escalate and restore relations through diplomacy and mediation, based on respect for international law and OSCE commitments;
15. Urges the VP/HR, under the first strategy track, to draft further sanctions, targeting key economic sectors and officials responsible in the Russian state service and beyond, for violations of international law and the territorial integrity of neighbouring states, so as to enable the European Council and the Council to adopt these sanctions immediately

should the ceasefire line agreed in Minsk or any other international agreements be violated; takes the view that these further sanctions should target in particular the energy and financial sectors; reiterates that sanctions adopted so far are reversible and scalable, depending on the implementation of the Minsk agreements and the situation on the ground;

16. Points to its recommendation of 2 April 2014 on establishing common visa restrictions for Russian officials involved in the Sergei Magnitskii case and urges the VP/HR and the Commission to bring the relevant initiative into the Council without delay; is of the view that personally targeted restrictive measures should be considered if no credible investigation into the murder of Boris Nemtsov is carried out;
17. Takes the view that sanctions should be scaled down and cooperation developed once Russia fully implements the Minsk agreements, contributes to the peaceful solution of the conflict in eastern Ukraine and fully respects its OSCE commitments, including to the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of its neighbours;
18. Calls upon the VP/HR to develop, in coordination with the Commission, options for strengthening direct cooperation with the Russian population, small and medium-sized businesses, scientific and cultural institutions and civil society;
19. Notes the suspension of the negotiations on visa facilitation, and calls on the Commission and the Member States to facilitate the issuing of visas for Russian citizens not targeted by EU or US restrictive measures so as to enhance student and scientific exchanges, and business and civil society contacts; underlines that the EU and the Member States have sufficient scope to facilitate visa rules unilaterally;
20. Encourages the VP/HR to examine, in cooperation with the Commission, possible modalities for cooperation between the EU and the Eurasian Customs Union;
21. Stresses the importance of providing political, economic and financial support to Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, which democratically decided to conclude an Association Agreement with the EU, assist the reform efforts of their governments and advance sectorial cooperation, in particular on energy, justice and home affairs, transport and the environment; underlines the need for a thorough procedure for ex ante and ex post control of the fulfilment of targets commonly agreed between the parties;
22. Urges the VP/HR to come up with a plan to upgrade the EU's strategic communication, to effectively deal with disinformation and to support the development of media initiatives in the Russian language in the EU and in the Eastern Partnership countries;
23. Calls on the Commission to propose draft legislation forbidding financing of political parties in the EU by political or economic stakeholders outside the EU;
24. Points to the importance of decreasing the EU's energy dependence on authoritarian countries exporting oil and gas, strengthening its energy diversification and, most importantly, finalising the Energy Union by enforcing the common regulatory framework, finalising the energy grid by building energy interconnectors and adopting a common mechanism on negotiations with third countries;

25. Encourages the Commission to enforce existing competition law which separates owners of energy infrastructure from energy producers, including in the case of the reverse flow of gas from Slovakia to Ukraine;
26. Underlines the fact that the developments in the Eastern Neighbourhood demonstrate the need for EU unity and for the Member States to increase their defence spending and capabilities, and the need to develop the common security and defence policy towards real and tangible defence cooperation;
27. Condemns the abduction of an Estonian security officer from Estonian territory to Russia and reiterates its calls on the Russian authorities to release Mr Kohver immediately and allow his safe return to Estonia;
28. Reiterates its call that those responsible for shooting down flight MH17 should be brought to Ukrainian or international justice;
29. Underlines the fact that Russian approval for the full recovery of the wreck and black boxes from the crash site of Polish Air Force flight TU154 would act as a confidence-building measure;
30. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council, the Commission, the Member States, the Russian State Duma and Federation Council and the Russian Government and President.