



Plenary sitting

B8-0078/2016

15.1.2016

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 Association Agreements / Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine
(2015/3032(RSP))

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on behalf of the ECR Group

European Parliament resolution on the Association Agreements / Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine (2015/3032(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Association Agreements / Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (AA/DCFTAs) between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, of the other part,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, as well as its recent report on the Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the Eastern Partnership,
 - having regard to the Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit held in Riga on 21-22 May 2015,
 - having regard to the progress reports on Georgia's and Ukraine's implementation of the action plan on visa liberalisation of 18 December 2015,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine have all ratified the Association Agreements (AAs), with their Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTA), thus choosing the path of closer political and economic integration with the European Union;
- B. whereas all three countries have unresolved frozen or ongoing conflicts on their territories, in which Russia plays a role as an active participant (eastern Ukraine), occupier (Crimea) or guarantor of the status quo (Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Transnistria);
- C. whereas Moldovan citizens have enjoyed visa-free travel to the EU since April 2014, while in December 2015 the Commission indicated that Georgia and Ukraine have met all the requirements set out in the Visa Liberalisation Action Plans (VLAPs);
1. Stresses the importance of the Association Agreements, with their Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area components; calls on all Member States that have not yet done so to ratify these agreements as soon as possible, for all three association countries;
 2. Welcomes the progress achieved so far by Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine in implementing the reforms required under the AAs and DCFTAs; underlines the need to provide full support to the authorities in pursuit of the reform agenda, and calls on the Commission to make every effort to do so;
 3. Underlines its firm support for the territorial integrity of all three countries; calls on the Russian Federation to end the occupation of Crimea, and to put an immediate end to all

direct or indirect involvement in the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, as well as in the frozen conflicts in Georgia and Moldova; welcomes the decision of the Council of 21 December 2015 to extend the economic sanctions against the Russian Federation, following the non-fulfilment of the Minsk agreements;

4. Condemns in the strongest possible terms the actions taken by Russia to undermine or derail the pro-European course chosen by the three association countries; calls on Moscow to refrain from interfering in those countries' internal affairs, and recalls that each country is free to decide on its future and on choosing its alliances;
5. Welcomes the recent report by the Commission on the fulfilment by Ukraine and Georgia of all the criteria required for Schengen visa-free travel; underlines the importance of granting the visa-free regime, as the most direct and visible benefit of closer cooperation with the European Union for ordinary citizens;
6. Underlines the need to vigorously pursue the reform agenda, especially in the areas of the judiciary and the rule of law, and to fight corruption and organised crime, as important prerequisites for the socio-economic development of the three association countries;
7. Underlines that civil society has a key role to play in monitoring the implementation of the Association Agreements and of the related actions by governments and parliaments; stresses, therefore, the need for civil society organisations to be given the means and capacity to effectively fulfil that role, in all three association countries;
8. Stresses that the signing and ratification of the Association Agreements does not constitute a final goal in relations with the EU, and points out that pursuant to Article 49 TEU any European state may apply to become a member of the European Union provided it adheres to the principles of democracy, respects fundamental freedoms and human and minority rights, and ensures the rule of law;

Georgia

9. Welcomes the progress made in the implementation of the DCFTA and the good pace of approximation of Georgian legislation to EU standards;
10. Welcomes the progress achieved by Georgia over the last three years in all areas covered by the four blocks of the VLAP, and commends the commitment shown in this regard by the Georgian authorities;
11. Stresses that freedom of the media, freedom of expression and plurality of information are fundamental values of a democratic society; is concerned at the adverse effects on media plurality of cases such as that of the Rustavi 2 broadcasting company; calls on the Georgian authorities to guarantee media pluralism and editorial independence, especially on the eve of the 2016 parliamentary elections;
12. Underlines in this regard that judicial proceedings should be transparent, impartial and free from political motivation; calls on Georgia to continue and fully implement the reform of the judiciary, including strengthening its independence and depoliticising the prosecutor's office; is concerned at the extensive use of pre-trial detention, which

should be an exceptional measure applied only in urgent and unambiguous circumstances;

13. Underlines that the existence of a political opposition is paramount if there is to be a balanced and mature political system, and stresses that any act of violence against members of any political party should be promptly and thoroughly investigated;

Moldova

14. Is concerned at the lack of political stability which has prevailed since the parliamentary elections of 30 November 2014; underlines that this situation is detrimental to pursuing the necessary reforms and implementing the AA and DCFTA;
15. Calls on the pro-European parties in the country to engage in serious talks on forming a new, stable government that would reinvigorate the reform process and capitalise on the progress made thus far in advancing sectoral reforms and in bringing Moldovan law into line with the EU acquis;
16. Underlines that further efforts are needed in combating corruption, creating an independent and depoliticised judiciary, and stabilising the economy of Moldova; regrets the fact that, by reason of the political instability of Moldova's institutions and their inability to deliver, EU financial assistance has been suspended since early 2015;
17. Calls on the authorities to fully and thoroughly investigate the corruption scandal and the theft of EUR 1 billion from the banking system and to bring those responsible to justice;

Ukraine

18. Expresses its appreciation of the efforts already made by all Ukrainian institutions in favour of reforms, despite the difficult internal situation, and welcomes the implementation of the DCFTA as of 1 January 2016;
19. Reiterates its strong support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, and condemns Russia's aggressive and expansionist policy and its continuous and direct military, logistic and financial support for the separatists, as well as the lack of any will to normalise the situation and fulfil the international obligations that the Russian authorities have themselves assumed to that end; is deeply concerned at the growing number of violations of the ceasefire since October 2015;
20. Deplores the fact that ongoing Russian aggression has caused a dire humanitarian situation in the Donbas while Ukrainian and international humanitarian organisations are refused access to the occupied regions; expresses its deep concern over the humanitarian challenge posed by the living conditions of the more than 1.5 million internally displaced persons; is deeply concerned at the human rights violations in Russian-occupied Crimea, especially the dire situation of the Crimean Tatars;
21. Calls for the release of all hostages, as foreseen in the Minsk agreements, and of the Ukrainian citizens illegally detained in the Russian Federation, including Nadiya

Savchenko, Oleg Sentsov, Oleksandr Kolchenko and others;

22. Stresses the need to strengthen efforts to combat deep-rooted corruption in the country, and welcomes the steps taken by the Ukrainian Parliament to establish an institutional framework to that end;
23. Expects from the Ukrainian authorities the swift and rigorous implementation of the provisions of the DCFTA and the Association Agenda; underlines the need to make further progress in numerous areas, including the constitutional reform process, changes to the judiciary and the rule of law, while taking particular account of the difficult financial situation of the country;
24. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Member States, the governments and parliaments of the Eastern Partnership countries and of the Russian Federation, the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly, and the Parliamentary Assemblies of the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.