

17th EU-Russia Summit

European Parliament resolution on the EU-Russia Summit held in Sochi on 25 May 2006

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between the European Communities and their Member States and the Russian Federation¹, which entered into force on 1 December 1997 and will expire in 2007,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on Russia and Chechnya and, in particular, its recommendation of 26 February 2004 to the Council on EU-Russia relations², as well as its resolution of 15 December 2004 on the EU-Russia Summit held in The Hague on 25 November 2004³,
 - having regard to the outcome of the 17th EU-Russia Summit, held in Sochi on 25 May 2006,
 - having regard to the EU-Russia Human Rights dialogue,
 - having regard to the current international and European responsibilities of Russia, in its capacity as President-in-Office of the G8 and Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe,
 - having regard to Rule 103(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas enhanced cooperation and good neighbourly relations between the EU and Russia are of key importance to the stability, security and prosperity of the whole of Europe,
- B. whereas both sides underline the importance of the strategic EU-Russia partnership and their intention to further intensify their cooperation in Europe and beyond on the basis of shared interests and common values, in particular democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights,
- C. whereas the EU-Russia Summit held in St Petersburg in May 2003 decided to adopt four common spaces, adding a space of freedom, security and justice, a space of external security and a space of research, education and culture to the Common Economic Space that had been agreed on two years earlier; whereas both sides reviewed the progress made to date in the implementation of the four common spaces,
- D. whereas, in the field of energy in particular, relations must be further enhanced on the basis of transparency and improved governance of this sector, reliability of supply, non-discriminatory use of transit facilities and an improved climate for further

¹ OJ L 327, 28.11.1997, p. 1.

² OJ C 98 E, 23.4.2004, p. 182.

³ OJ C 226 E, 15.9.2005, p. 224.

investment,

- E. whereas the EU, following its last enlargement, is deeply committed to the implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy as one of the top priorities of its external actions, with the subsequent further involvement in the resolution of conflicts in Transnistria and the South Caucasus; whereas the EU and Russia have a joint responsibility to bring about peaceful solutions to conflicts in their immediate vicinities,
- F. whereas there are continuing and increasing concerns over the weakening of democracy in Russia, the increased State control of the media, the worsening climate for non-governmental organisations, the increased political control of the judiciary, the increased difficulties impeding the ability of the political opposition to operate, and other measures which have considerably strengthened the power of the Kremlin,
- G. whereas increased cooperation should take place with a view to strengthening democracy, security and stability in the common neighbourhood, in particular through joint activities to establish democracy and respect for basic human rights in Belarus,
- H. whereas since May 2006 the Russian Federation has held the rotating chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe; whereas the first priority of Russia for its chairmanship, as presented by its Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, is 'Reinforcing national human rights protection mechanisms, development of human rights education and rights of national minorities',
 - 1. Stresses the importance of a strengthened and enhanced partnership between the European Union and the Russian Federation based on interdependence and shared interests in the development of all four common spaces, but takes the view that the present partnership with Russia is more pragmatic than strategic since it reflects in the first place common economic interests without achieving major results as regards human rights and the rule of law;
 - 2. Welcomes the ongoing work on the Common Economic Space (CES), which has the overall objective of bringing down barriers to trade and investment and promoting reforms and competitiveness, based on the principles of non-discrimination, transparency and good governance, but regrets the lack of substantial progress on the practical implementation of the Road Maps for the other three Common Spaces;
 - 3. Urges the Commission to give a full explanation in a timely and transparent way of its policy regarding Russia's accession to the WTO, taking into account all negotiated areas and sectors;
 - 4. Urges the Commission to investigate existing cases of discrimination in trade in agricultural products by the Russian authorities against Member States such as Poland, but also against states in the common neighbourhood such as Moldova and Georgia;
 - 5. Underlines the strategic importance of cooperation on energy and the need to enhance EU-Russia energy relations; regrets, therefore, that the summit failed to secure an agreement in this field and stresses as a basis for further negotiations the principle of interdependence and transparency as well as the importance of reciprocity in terms of access to markets, infrastructure and investment, with the objective of avoiding

oligopolistic market structures and diversifying the European Union's energy supply; in this context, calls on Russia to ratify the Energy Charter Treaty and to increase cooperation on energy savings and renewable energy,

6. Welcomes the signing of agreements on visa facilitation and readmission aimed at easing visa restrictions on travel for certain categories of citizens as well as facilitating the expulsion of immigrants illegally entering the EU from Russian territory;
7. Emphasises the need to work together with Russia as a necessary strategic partner with a view to providing peace, stability and security, and fighting international terrorism and violent extremism, as well as addressing 'soft security' issues such as environmental and nuclear hazards, drugs, arms and human trafficking, and cross-border organised crime in the European neighbourhood, in cooperation with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and other international fora;
8. Welcomes the agreement on the terms of the Commission's EUR 20 million programme of assistance for socio-economic recovery in the North Caucasus as a further sign of the willingness of the EU and Russia to cooperate in this region;
9. Supports the work being jointly undertaken by both partners to intensify practical cooperation in crisis management and stresses the need to cooperate also in strengthening multilateral non-proliferation mechanisms;
10. Welcomes the proposal of the forthcoming Finnish Presidency to give priority to the Northern Dimension in the programme for its Council Presidency; stresses that this could be an important tool for enhancing the EU-Russia partnership, for which concrete proposals and projects should be drawn up with the necessary accompanying financing;
11. Regrets that as regards the Common Space of External Security no progress was made on conflict resolution in Transnistria and South Caucasus, with no real improvement in Chechnya and no willingness by the Russian side to engage with Belarus so as to start a genuine process of democratisation in that country;

Human Rights Dialogue

12. Recognises the importance of the various dialogues established to improve the functioning of EU-Russian cooperation and partnership and underlines in particular the need for an effective Human Rights Dialogue;
13. Also calls on the Russian Government, within this framework, to contribute to the intensification of the EU-Russia Human Rights Consultations as an essential part of the EU-Russia partnership and to allow the free functioning of domestic and international human rights organisations and other non-governmental organisations;
14. Takes note of the declaration of the Austrian Presidency on the outcome of the EU-Russia consultation on human rights which took place in March 2006; welcomes, in this regard, the decision of the Austrian Presidency to launch inquiries into cases of disappearances and torture in Chechnya;
15. Urges the Russian Federation, as a member of the Council of Europe, to improve

conditions for prisoners and put an end to the difficulties faced by lawyers in seeking to gain access to some of those prisoners; points out that, pursuant to the Russian Criminal Code, detainees should be imprisoned either close to their residence or close to where their trial took place, as exemplified by the prisoners Mr Khodorkovsky and Mr Lebedev;

16. Calls on the partners to enhance the Human Rights Dialogue in the new agreement, following the expiration of the PCA, into a well structured and more transparent instrument for progress towards a common human rights policy;
17. Expects that the existing version of the PCA, which expires in 2007 and focuses also on human rights and civil liberties, will be the foundation of the new PCA and welcomes the agreement reached at the summit that the current PCA will remain valid until the new agreement enters into force;
18. Calls on the Russian Government to honour its responsibility as President of the G8 and as Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to achieve tangible results in the further development of transparent trade and reliable economic relations and in the establishment of stability, security, democracy and respect for human rights;

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19. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the President and Parliament of the Russian Federation, the OSCE and the Council of Europe.