

Estonia

European Parliament resolution of 24 May 2007 on Estonia

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the EU Presidency Statement of 2 May 2007 on the situation in front of the Estonian embassy in Moscow,
 - having regard to the statement made by its President Hans-Gert Pöttering and the debate in plenary on the situation in Estonia on 9 May 2007,
 - having regard to the numerous statements of support for Estonia by the Council, the Commission and governments of the Member States,
 - having regard to Rule 103(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas, in the capital of Estonia and in parts of north-east Estonia, between 26 and 28 April 2007, demonstrators protesting against the Estonian Government's decision to relocate the Soviet 'monument to the liberators of Tallinn' from the centre of the Estonian capital to the Cemetery of the Estonian Defence Forces a few kilometres away were responsible for two nights of violence, which started with demonstrators attacking the police and resulted in widespread vandalism in the centre of Tallinn,
- B. whereas police were seen using force only in extreme situations, and the Estonian Chancellor of Justice has not identified any mismanagement of the actions of the police,
- C. whereas the Government of Estonia explained in advance the reasons for its decision to the Government of the Russian Federation, offering to cooperate with them during the relocation of the monument and encouraging Russian representatives to attend the exhumations of the remains, which the Russian authorities refused to do,
- D. whereas the exhumations were conducted strictly in accordance with international standards and norms of dignified conduct and whereas the monument has been reopened in the military cemetery with an official ceremony and participation by anti-Hitler coalition representatives,
- E. whereas the violent demonstrations and attacks on law and order were carried out with the active organisation and cooperation of forces located outside Estonia,
- F. whereas several high-level declarations have been made in Russia, including an official statement by the State Duma delegation on its visit to Tallinn, calling on the Estonian Government to step down,
- G. whereas the Estonian Prime Minister Andrus Ansip has declared that these events constitute a well-coordinated and flagrant intervention into the internal affairs of Estonia,
- H. whereas immediately after the riots in Tallinn the normal functioning of the Estonian

embassy in Moscow was blocked for seven days by hostile demonstrators from the Russian pro-government youth organisation 'Nashi', which resulted in physical attacks on the Estonian and Swedish Ambassadors, threats to demolish the embassy building, the tearing down of the Estonian flag situated on embassy territory, and the labelling of Estonia a 'fascist' country,

- I. whereas systematic cyber attacks have been organised, mostly from outside Estonia, in an attempt to block official communication lines and Estonian administration websites; whereas those attacks have come from Russian administration IP addresses, and whereas intensive propaganda attacks have continued via the Internet and mobile telephone messages calling for armed resistance and further violence,
- J. whereas only a few days after the events in Tallinn, wide-scale restrictions on Estonian exports to Russia were introduced, with Russian companies suspending contracts with Estonian firms, Estonia's energy supplies being threatened and the Estonia-St. Petersburg train connection being suspended with effect from the end of June 2007,
- K. whereas the Russian authorities, including the State Duma delegation, have unfortunately refused to enter into dialogue with the Estonian authorities and declined even to participate in a joint press conference at the Foreign Ministry,
- L. whereas Metropolitan Cornelius of the Estonian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate has stated that there are no grounds for intercommunal conflict and that he sees no reason to present the riots as a conflict between Estonian-language and Russian-language communities,
- M. whereas the events were further fuelled by misinformation issued by Russian media channels, provoking further protests,
- N. whereas only a tiny part of the ethnic Russian population participated in the demonstrations and looting, the considerable number of policemen of Russian background performed their duty with excellence, and the great majority of all those questioned approved the conduct of the Estonian Government,
- O. whereas Estonia, as an independent Member State of the EU and NATO, has the sovereign right to assess its recent tragic past, starting with the loss of independence resulting from the Hitler-Stalin Pact of 1939 and ending only in 1991,
- P. whereas the Soviet occupation and annexation of the Baltic States was never recognised as legal by the Western democracies,
- Q. whereas, in its resolution of 12 May 2005 on the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe on 8 May 1945¹, the European Parliament concluded that 'for some nations the end of World War II meant renewed tyranny inflicted by the Stalinist Soviet Union' and congratulated the central and eastern European countries on the occasion of their liberation 'after so many decades under Soviet domination or occupation',
- R. whereas only the legal successor to the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation, still denies

¹ OJ C 92 E, 20.4.2006, p. 392.

the fact of the illegal incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union,

1. Expresses its support for, and solidarity with, the democratically elected Estonian Government in its efforts to ensure order, stability and the rule of law for all residents of Estonia;
2. Regards attacks targeting one of the smallest EU Member States as a test case for the European Union's solidarity;
3. Considers inadmissible the various attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of Estonia by the Russian authorities;
4. Is alarmed by the inadequate protection by the Russian authorities of the Estonian embassy in Moscow and by the physical attacks on the Estonian Ambassador by the 'Nashi' demonstrators; calls on the Russian Government to respect the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations without any exception;
5. Condemns the attempts by Russia to exert economic pressure on Estonia as an instrument of foreign policy and calls on the Russian Government to restore normal economic relations between the two states;
6. Reminds the Russian authorities that the indiscriminate and openly hostile rhetoric used by the Russian authorities against Estonia is in sharp contrast to the principles of international behaviour and will affect EU-Russia relations generally;
7. Calls on the Commission and all the Member States to assist in the analyses of the cyber attacks on Estonian websites and to present a study on how such attacks and threats might be addressed at EU level; calls on Russia to assist in these investigations to the full;
8. Calls on the Russian Government to engage in an open and unbiased dialogue with the eastern and central European democracies on the history of the 20th century, as well as on the crimes against humanity, including those of totalitarian communism, committed then;
9. Welcomes the words of the Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who emphasised that people who came to Estonia in Soviet times and now live in the Republic of Estonia, as well as their children and grandchildren, are all Estonian fellow countrymen, that all Estonians have their own, very painful experience of life under three consecutive occupying powers in the last century, and that there is a need to be able to see and understand the tragedies of others, and who furthermore reminded all parties concerned that, for that purpose, the Estonian domestic dialogue must be enhanced so as to bridge existing gaps between the different communities and to create new opportunities to integrate Russian-speaking countrymen in particular;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Government and Parliament of the Russian Federation.