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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to the Council and Commission statements

pursuant to Rule 37(2) of the Rules of Procedure

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on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

on Chechnya

European Parliament resolution on Chechnya

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the findings of its ad hoc delegation to Chechnya (15-17 June 2003),
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on Russia,
 - having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Russia, which entered into force on 1 December 1997,
 - having regard to the Common Strategy of the EU on Russia dating from June 1999 and valid for a period of four years,
 - having regard to its resolutions of 10 April 2002¹ and 16 January 2003² on Chechnya,
 - having regard to its resolution of 21 November 2002 on the outcome of the EU-Russia summit of 11 November 2002³,
 - having regard to the Commission Communication to the Council and Parliament of 11 March 2003 entitled 'Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: a new framework for relations with our eastern and southern neighbours' (COM(2003) 104),
 - having regard to the sixth meeting of the Cooperation Council between the EU and Russia on 15 April 2003,
 - having regard to the 2003 tercentenary celebrations in St Petersburg and the EU's representation,
- A. whereas the conflict in Chechnya is far from being solved with attacks, atrocities and abuses having become part of daily life and no real peace perspective looming,
- B. whereas a referendum took place in the Chechen Republic on 23 March which was regarded by the Russian authorities as a very first step towards stabilisation of the situation, but which was flawed by widespread irregularities and did not contribute to the pacification of Chechnyan society,
- C. whereas the people of Chechnya, regardless of their ethnic background, are suffering dramatically from the daily consequences of this conflict,
- D. whereas, as in all armed conflict, the vulnerable sections of the population are those who suffer most and who will be bear the long-term repercussions,

¹ P5_TA(2002)0174.

² P5_TA(2003)0024.

³ P5_TA(2002)0563.

- E. whereas living conditions in Chechnya and in particular in Grozny are disastrous, the water supply, sewage system and electricity grid are severely damaged, the employment situation is apparently shattered and security is obviously very low,
 - F. highly concerned at the plight of the more than 110 000 Chechen refugees sheltered in appalling conditions in the camps in the bordering republics,
 - G. whereas humanitarian organizations are being hindered in their work by a lack of access to Chechnya and of support from the Russian side, in particular for permissions to import the necessary technical and security equipment,
 - H. whereas the European Union and other international donors have repeatedly offered their assistance to alleviate the humanitarian situation,
 - I. whereas the OSCE mission's original 1995 mandates in Chechnya covered alleged human rights violations, relief aid, help for refugees, conflict resolution and supporting mechanisms for maintaining law and order,
 - J. stressing that a genuine EU-Russia partnership must be based on the sharing of common values and that the present appalling situation of human rights in Chechnya is an obstacle to its full development,
 - K. welcoming the new peace plan presented by former Chechen minister Akhmadov urging the full involvement of the United Nations in Chechnya with a view to the conditional self-determination of this republic in a three-year period,
 - L. taking note of the amnesty law which entered into force in the beginning of June and is regarded as ineffective because it does not guarantee immunity from prosecution for people accused of trying to kill a federal serviceman or police officer,
 - M. pointing out that, throughout the Caucasus, many conflicts and territorial claims are interconnected and that this must be duly addressed in a comprehensive and objective way in order to achieve a real stabilisation of the region;
1. Thanks the Russian authorities for organising the visit of the ad hoc delegation to Chechnya and welcomes this as a sign of openness, but regrets its continuous postponement which for years prevented the European Parliament from obtaining a clear view of the situation on the ground;
 2. Regrets that, at the last EU/Russia summit held in St Petersburg, the issue of Chechnya was dealt with in the framework of the fight against terror; considers that the ongoing conflict has to be seen as a conflict of various dimensions that cannot be limited to terrorism; points out that the absence of full reconciliation and physical reconstruction after the first Chechen war, in particular, maintained hostilities between Chechens and Russians and provided the ideal ground for a wide range of criminal activities;
 3. Reaffirms that there cannot be a military solution for Chechnya; urges, in this respect, the Russian Central Government to pave the way for the start of a real peace process involving all the parties concerned, including the representatives of the last legitimate

president Maskhadov and to intensify efforts to reconstruct Grozny and other parts of Chechnya in order to provide the basic means for political and social reconciliation;

4. Reiterates its concerns and firm condemnation of the persistent and recurring mass violations of humanitarian law and human rights committed against the civilian population by Russian forces, which constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity that must be investigated and prosecuted as well as the attacks, the violations and the kidnappings of paramilitary and guerrilla groups;
5. Urges the Russian authorities to allow unrestricted access to independent media and human rights monitors whose role is indispensable with regard to reporting human rights violations and giving a balanced picture of the situation;
6. Urges the Russian Federation to agree to the renewal and the enlargement of the OSCE mandate, which should not be restricted to focusing only on coordinating humanitarian assistance in the region, but also include all former tasks of the OSCE missions;
7. Calls on the Russian Government to facilitate access for NGOs and in particular humanitarian health organizations to the region, providing security and giving permissions for the import of the necessary technical and security equipment;
8. Underlines that the return of internally displaced people should be an objective, but that this return must be voluntary and based on real improvement in living conditions in Chechnya, in particular as regards security;
9. Recalls that the reconstruction of Chechnya is directly linked to achieving lasting peace in the region and to starting full reconciliation; and that, while the primary responsibility lies with Russia, the EU is ready to assist the Russian Government and the Chechen authorities in this process;
10. Underlines that the severe fighting and bombing and the use of prohibited weapons such as cassettes and vacuum bombs and chemical grenades caused many casualties as well as an ecological disaster (forest destruction, pollution of rivers, widespread environmental damage); urges the Commission, in this regard, to grant emergency assistance to the Chechnyan authorities for the restoration of acceptable living conditions;
11. Welcomes the decision by the Commission to make further funds available for humanitarian aid to Chechen refugees;
12. Stresses that the referendum which should have led to the normalization of the situation in the region has brought no concrete improvement; believes, in this respect, that the start of a political process involving all sections of Chechen society is a precondition for holding truly democratic and fully representative elections by the end of the year;
13. Calls on the Commission to prepare as of now a possible programme for rehabilitation in Chechnya; considers, in particular, that educational programmes such as professional training and support for higher-education cycles will be needed urgently for the rehabilitation of a whole generation of young people deeply endangered by the decade of armed conflict;

14. Reiterates its call on the Council to appoint a special envoy for the Caucasus in order to enhance the profile of the EU in the region and contribute more effectively to the solution of the ongoing problems; calls on the Council, in this regard, to launch the proposal for a regional conference for the Caucasus, involving all the countries in the region, with a view to defining principles and laying down guidelines and criteria in order to establish an overall approach to the existing conflicts and territorial claims and lay the foundations for a real process of stabilisation;
15. Urges the Member States to grant asylum to members of the last elected Chechnyan government who would not be allowed a fair trial if extradited to Russia;
16. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the President and the Government of Russia and the Duma.