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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to the Commission statement

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

by Carles-Alfred Gasòliba i Böhm and Marieke Sanders-ten Holte

on behalf of the ELDR Group

on the situation in Bolivia

European Parliament resolution on the situation in Bolivia

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Presidency Conclusions of the European Council meeting which took place in Brussels on 16-17 October 2003,
 - having regard to the Commission statement on the situation in Bolivia,
 - having regard to Rule 37(2) of the Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the recent demonstrations were principally caused by President Sanchez de Lozada's proposal to construct a pipeline to export natural gas to the United States and Mexico, but also by his reform strategy, which has bred particular resentment,
- B. whereas a popular tide of protest has swept much of the country and left as many as 80 people dead over the past few weeks,
- C. whereas the government's heavy-handed response to the protests galvanised thousands of labour unions, students and government opponents who have long harboured discontent with Sanchez de Lozada's administration,
- D. whereas Vice-President Carlos Mesa took office as Bolivia's new President and quickly proposed holding early elections,
- E. whereas the majority of the Bolivian people endure great hardship, and urgent action is needed to ensure that their demands for social justice are answered and that the developing democratic process continues to move forward,
1. Expresses its concern at the recent dramatic developments in Bolivia and condemns the repression and violent incidents which have led to the loss of human lives;
 2. Expresses the hope that President Sanchez de Lozada's resignation will help solve Bolivia's problems and welcomes the undertaking by the new President, Carlos Mesa, to find a peaceful, democratic and constitutional solution to the present crisis;
 3. Notes the pledge to hold a 'binding referendum' on exploitation of Bolivia's natural gas;
 4. Calls on the Bolivian authorities to carry out an immediate investigation into the circumstances in which civilians were killed, and stresses that those responsible must answer for their actions before the Bolivian justice system;
 5. Calls on the European Union and its Member States adequately to support the new government in order that the country may extricate itself from the political and economic quagmire;

6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the Government of Bolivia.