

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

1999



2004

Session document

13 November 2003

B5-0472/2003

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to the Council and Commission statements

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

by Esko Olavi Seppänen, Pernille Frahm, Marianne Eriksson and André Brie

on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

on the Northern dimension

European Parliament resolution on the Northern dimension

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 16 January 2003 on the Northern Dimension New Action Plan 2004-2006,
 - having regard to the Second Northern Dimension Action Plan endorsed at the European Council held in Brussels on 16 and 17 October 2003 and the Commission Working Document (COM (2003) 343 final),
 - having regard to the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament "Wider Europe - Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours" (COM (2003) 104 final),
 - having regard to the conclusions on the Future of the Northern Dimension Policies of the European Union adopted at the Ministerial Conference on the Northern Dimension in Luxembourg on 21 October 2002,
 - having regard to the Northern Dimension Labour Market Forum held in Helsinki on 11 February 2003,
 - having regard to the conclusions of the founding meeting of the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Wellbeing held in Oslo on 27 October 2003,
- A. whereas the Brussels European Council adopted a new Action Plan for the Northern Dimension with five priority sectors: (1) economy, business and infrastructure, (2) human resources, education, culture, scientific research and health, (3) the environment, nuclear safety and natural resources, (4) cross-border cooperation and regional development and (5) justice and home affairs,
- B. whereas the Northern Dimension is now moving into a new phase as it will have an important contribution to make towards carrying forward the EU's new neighbourhood policy, building on shared interests and a common agenda between the enlarged Union and its neighbours,
- C. whereas the success of the Northern Dimension initiative in the future depends on the active participation of all actors involved at national, regional and local level, including social partners and civil society,
- D. whereas the overall objective of the Northern Dimension policies should be to stimulate sustainable development and economic growth, to reduce poverty and to increase welfare as well as to strengthen democracy and stability in the ND area,
- E. whereas poverty is still a huge problem in Russia and some other states and poverty is the

main reason for most of the health and social problems in this area as well as for illegal immigration and trafficking,

- F. whereas gender equality should be mainstreamed in implementing the Action Plan so that both women and men are equal participants and beneficiaries in its programmes,
 - G. whereas maritime safety remains an important issue, especially in the Baltic Sea, where oil transport by tankers is increasing rapidly; whereas the Baltic Sea is already heavily polluted and its position as an inland sea makes it especially vulnerable,
 - H. whereas in the Northern and Arctic regions the effects of global climate change could be dramatic,
1. Notes the New Action Plan adopted by the Council;
 2. Emphasises the need to involve elected representatives at all levels in the preparation of the Action Plan and in the process of political implementation; regrets that this democratic dimension is missing from the Action Plan;
 3. Stresses that the trade unions and not only business should be represented in negotiating different projects under ND, because all projects include issues concerning working life and employees;
 4. Recalls the crucial role of women especially in solving health and social problems and insists that women's organisations are taken as partners in the social and health projects;
 5. Welcomes the inclusion of the employment and social objectives of the Lisbon strategy in the Action Plan but demands more action to create employment in this region, especially improved employment opportunities for women, who have suffered most from the collapse of the former social infrastructure;
 6. Welcomes the attention paid to the question of trafficking in women and gives its support to the idea presented in the Action Plan of projects aimed at improving the situation of victims and potential victims and at discouraging demand for sexual services from women and children;
 7. Welcomes the central role in the Action Plan for education and training and underlines the importance of lifelong learning for all;
 8. Recalls that in developing the transport infrastructure in the Northern Dimension region, special attention must be paid to the environmental sustainability of proposed solutions by giving rail and sea transport priority; considers that a railway connection should be built between the Nordic countries and the Komi region in Russia to make use of the huge natural resources in Komi;
 9. Welcomes the proposals concerning maritime safety, particularly in the Baltic Sea, through acceleration of the exclusive use of double-hull tankers and the plan to propose a designation of the Baltic Sea as a Particularly Sensitive Area through the International

Maritime Organisation; underlines however, that maritime safety is also a social issue that is related to the skills, working conditions and wages of seafarers;

10. Is still deeply concerned about the risks associated with the Sosnovy Bor nuclear plant, which uses very old-fashioned technology and is situated near the big cities of St Petersburg, Helsinki and Tallinn; notes that the new Action Plan does not make any proposals concerning Sosnovy Bor but confines itself to Ignalina;
11. Renews its demand that the Commission should analyse the effects of a separate ND budget line; considers it important furthermore that the EIB's mandate should be extended to finance infrastructure in Russia;
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council and the governments of the Member States and the seven Partner Countries (Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and the Russian Federation).