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## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on statements by the Council and Commission

pursuant to Rule 103(2) of the Rules of Procedure

by Daniel Marc Cohn-Bendit, Milan Horáček, Tatjana Ždanoka, Marie Anne Isler Béguin, Hélène Flautre and Bart Staes

on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

on Chechnya after the elections and civil society in Russia

**European Parliament resolution on Chechnya after the elections and civil society in Russia**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Russia, particularly that of 15 December 2005,
  - having regard to the agreed common objective of the EU and Russia to set up a common economic space, a common space of freedom, security and justice, a space of cooperation in the field of external security and a space of research and education, including cultural aspects,
  - having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Russia, which entered into force on 1 December 1997,
  - having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas on 27 December 2005 Russia's Federation Council gave the final approval by a vote of 153-1 with one abstention to the draft law entitled 'on introducing amendments to certain legislative acts of the Russian Federation', which amends the current legislation on the registration of NGOs and in particular the laws 'on civil society organisations', 'on non-commercial organisations' and 'on closed administrative-territorial formations',
- B. whereas the new law is set to increase the government's control over NGOs, impose strict curbs on human rights groups and other non-profit organisations and expose non-governmental groups to political pressure or even force them to close,
- C. whereas at second reading on 21 December 2005 the Duma revised the first-reading version of the bill, backing away from a requirement that international groups register as purely Russian groups, but whereas new requirements were added, such as one to report to the authorities in order to show that their work and spending did not oppose Russia's national, social or cultural interests,
- D. whereas this bill is now in the hands of President Putin who needs only to sign it into law; whereas this bill was drafted after President Putin's comment of July that foreign funding for political activities by NGOs is unacceptable following the allegations made by FSB director Patrushev who accused foreign NGOs of acting as a cover for foreign intelligence agencies in Russia and also of instigating revolutions in the CIS,
- E. having regard to the first parliamentary elections since 1999, which took place in Chechnya on 27 November 2005,
- F. whereas the official figure of a 57% turnout has been questioned by independent observers, who claim that participation was much lower and that the voting was marred by widespread fraud and acts of intimidation,

- G. whereas the 33 000 Russian military servicemen deployed in the republic were allowed to vote and only independent candidates or representatives of political parties who accepted that Chechnya was part of Russia were allowed to register to contest the poll,
- H. stressing that in spite of claims by the Russian authorities that Chechnya is returning to normality after a decade of war, in reality stability, peace and a viable future for the Chechen people are still very far away with continued armed confrontations, abductions and extrajudicial executions, widespread violence by armed groups within security services and lack of state control over these groups forming part of daily life,
- I. whereas in recent years democracy has been further substantially deteriorating in Russia, in particular due to the growth of government control over major TV and radio stations, the spread of self-censorship among the print media, the closure of independent media, restrictions on the right to organise public demonstrations, a worsening climate for NGOs with cases of harassment of human rights activists, abolition of the direct election of regional governors and increased political control of the judiciary,
- J. deeply worried at the fact that the racist attacks on foreigners by xenophobic groups in St Petersburg and other Russian cities are not always condemned by general public opinion and often remain unpunished by the law enforcement authorities,
- K. stressing that so far the EU-Russia human rights consultation has not brought about any substantial progress in this field, which should be a priority in EU-Russia relations,
- L. whereas the strategic partnership with Russia is turning out to be more than ever a pragmatic partnership since democracy, human rights and the rule of law are not shared common values,
- M. highlighting that the Yukos case with the large number of prosecutions, the fact that many former Yukos officials are living under the threat of arrest, the way the trials have been held and the unusually harsh sentences for those found guilty is a clear example of the lack of independence and transparency of the judiciary in Russia,
- N. whereas the dispute over gas pricing between Russia and Ukraine has showed once again the vulnerability of Europe as regards energy security and the necessity to diversify energy supplies and invest in alternatives,
1. Expresses its firm opposition to the draft law 'on introducing amendments to certain legislative acts of the Russian Federation', which aims to tighten control over civil society and will curtail the activities of many organisations, substantially limit citizens' constitutional right of assembly and impose severe restrictions on foreign non-commercial organisations operating in Russia;
  2. Calls, in this regard, on the Council and Commission to make every effort to support the development and consolidation of a strong, lively, independent and genuine civil society in Russia as a fundamental and indispensable element of a functioning democracy;
  3. Calls on President Putin not to sign the above law and to start a broad consultation with all the democratic components of Russian civil society in order to find ways to really

encourage, support and consolidate the setting-up of NGOs and non-profit groups;

4. Takes the view that conflict resolution in Chechnya should be based on the creation of authorities at all levels which can emerge and be legitimised only as a result of free and fair elections in which separatist forces which condemn terrorism are also allowed to participate;
5. Reaffirms that there cannot be a military solution to the conflict in Chechnya and calls for the start of a real peace process geared to bringing about a negotiated political settlement based on dialogue between all democratic components of Chechen society, which must also include supporters of Chechen independence;
6. Welcomes, in this regard, the statement by President Alu Alkhanov that he plans to hold a meeting with representatives of the rebel administration;
7. Calls on the Russian authorities to put an end to the present state of impunity, dismantling paramilitary groups, reining in the activities of security forces and bringing the army under full control;
8. Deeply regrets the weakening of Russia's commitment to democracy, protection of human rights, tolerance, free and independent media and independence of the judiciary, and points out that as long as these developments are not reversed, the full development of the EU-Russia partnership will be impeded;
9. Reiterates its view, in this respect, that the Road Map for the implementation of the four common spaces should be linked to concrete progress in the field of democracy and human rights;
10. Calls for the stepping-up of the EU-Russia human rights consultation so as to make it more effective, open to NGOs and result-oriented with a view to strengthening this element in the new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement due to be negotiated soon;
11. Deplores the ongoing persecution against businessmen Khodorkovsky and Lebedev; expresses its concern about the conditions in which they are detained and the difficulty they experience in gaining access to lawyers; points out that according to the Russian Criminal Code they should be imprisoned either close to their place of residence or close to the place where the trial took place;
12. Welcomes the agreement reached between the Russian and Ukrainian state energy companies on the pricing of gas supplies to Ukraine; regrets the rigid approach of the two sides and calls for the re-establishment of good-neighbourly relations; calls, in this regard, on the Commission and Council to find ways to facilitate cross-border cooperation between the two countries within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy;
13. Recalls the increased responsibilities of Russia on the world scene as it takes up the presidency of the G8 Group for the first time and, in this context, urges the Russian authorities to refrain from using energy supplies as an instrument of foreign policy aimed at destabilising neighbouring countries;

14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the President and Prime Minister of Russia, the State Duma and the President, Prime Minister and Parliament of Ukraine.