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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 Jan Marinus Wiersma, Hannes Swoboda and Alexandra Dobolyi

on behalf of the PSE Group

on the situation in Georgia

European Parliament resolution on the situation in Georgia

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and Georgia, which entered into force on 1 July 1999,
 - having regard to the inclusion of Georgia in the EU's European Neighbourhood Policy and the endorsement of the Action Plan by the EU-Georgia Cooperation Council on 14 November 2006,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on relations with the region, in particular its resolutions of February 2004 on EU policy towards the countries of the South Caucasus and of October 2006 on relations with Georgia,
 - having regard to its report on the European Neighbourhood Policy adopted in November 2007,
 - having regard to the recommendations adopted by the EU-Georgia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee on 25-26 June 2007,
 - having regard to the declaration of 8 November 2007 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the current situation in Georgia,
 - having regard to the conclusions of the eighth meeting of the EU-Georgia Cooperation Council held in Luxembourg on 16 October 2007,
 - having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the European Union is strongly committed to further strengthening its relations with Georgia; whereas the European Union therefore gives its full support to the economic and social development of Georgia as well as to the further development of its democratic institutions, full observance of democratic standards and procedures and full respect for the rule of law in the country,
- B. whereas deficiencies in the democratic process in Georgia, an increasingly authoritarian style of government and the fact that large sections of the Georgian population are not benefiting from Georgia's economic growth have provoked anti-government protests and demonstrations,
- C. whereas the recent unrest in Tbilisi underlines the need for the EU to be more engaged in the region and to support Georgia in its reform process,
- D. whereas six days of opposition rallies erupted in violence when security forces used excessive force to break up demonstrations, using water cannons, rubber bullets and tear gas, leaving up to five hundred protesters injured, including the Georgian Ombudsman,

Sozar Subari,

- E. whereas, on 7 November 2007, President Saakashvili declared a 15-day state of emergency in Tbilisi, since lifted on 16 November 2007, which government officials claim was necessary to restore immediate law and order,
- F. whereas independent media outlets were banned, and the opposition-run television channel Imedi TV, accused by the government of fuelling the protests with misinformation, was stormed by the police and abruptly forced off the air; whereas the major independent television stations have still not been able to resume broadcasting although the state of emergency has been lifted,
- G. whereas the decision to bring forward the presidential elections to 5 January 2008 is a positive development which has helped to defuse the political tension,
- H. whereas it must be ensured that the presidential elections and the election campaign will take place according to international democratic standards, in particular guaranteeing freedom of assembly and freedom of expression, and giving all candidates full and equal access to the media,
- I. whereas the EU, through the European Neighbourhood Policy, remains committed to supporting Georgia and assisting it towards democracy and stability through political and economic reforms, which will benefit the region as a whole,
 - 1. Expresses its concern at the disproportionate use of force against opposition protesters; calls on the Government to carry out an independent investigation into alleged police brutality during the unrest;
 - 2. Calls on the Georgian authorities to respect the principle of freedom of expression, including freedom of assembly and freedom of the media; reminds the Government of its commitment to democracy, human rights and the rule of law;
 - 3. Supports the ongoing talks between government and opposition party leaders and emphasises the need for all sides to fully engage in these talks in order to find a way out of the current political crisis;
 - 4. Impresses on the authorities the concern felt by the international community at the recent events in Georgia, which run counter to Euro-Atlantic values; reminds Georgia that democracy, human rights and the rule of law are prerequisites for ENP and future NATO membership;
 - 5. Welcomes the decision to hold early presidential elections on condition that all candidates have equal and impartial access to the media during the election campaign;
 - 6. Welcomes the invitation from President Saakashvili to international observers to monitor the elections; urges the Government to ensure that the elections are free and fair and conducted in accordance with international standards;
 - 7. Urges Georgia to restructure its economic and social reforms in order to raise the standard

of living to the benefit of the wider population; states that efforts must be made to tackle corruption at institutional level in order to gain public confidence;

8. Reiterates its commitment to uphold Georgia's territorial integrity and calls on the Council, the Member States and the Commission to continue to give their fullest support to a political settlement to the South Ossetia and Abkhazia conflicts;
9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the President-in-Office of the Council, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the President and Parliament of Georgia, and the State Duma of the Russian Federation.