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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for the debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 115 of the Rules of Procedure

by Ryszard Czarnecki, Adam Bielan, Hanna Foltyn-Kubicka, Ģirts Valdis Kristovskis, Ewa Tomaszewska, Konrad Szymański, Marcin Libicki, Roberts Zīle, Mieczysław Edmund Janowski

on behalf of the UEN Group

on the arrest of demonstrators following the presidential election in Russia

European Parliament resolution on the arrest of demonstrators following the presidential election in Russia

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the objectives of consolidating democracy and political freedoms in the Russian Federation, as laid down in the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Russian Federation, of the other part (PCA), which entered into force in 1997,
 - having regard to the EU-Russia human rights dialogue,
 - having regard to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its five protocols, and having regard to the EU-Russia consultations on human rights,
 - having regard to the many credible reports by Russian and international NGOs on the continuing violations of human rights in Chechnya,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on Russia, and in particular to its resolution of 25 October 2006 on EU-Russia relations following the murder of the Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya, its resolution of 13 December 2006 on the EU-Russia Summit in Helsinki on 24 November 2006, and its resolution of 26 April 2007 on Russia,
 - having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Mikhail Kasyanov, former Prime Minister and current leader of the People's Democratic Union, registered as a candidate on 14 December 2007 but was later disqualified by the Central Election Commission, which stated that too many of the 2 million signatures of support were forged, whereas Kasyanov appealed the decision to the Supreme Court which rejected the appeal on 6 February 2008,
- B. whereas the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, in its capacity as an international election standards watchdog (ODIHR), had to cancel its planned monitoring mission of the election because of what it called severe restrictions on its observers by the Russian Government,
- C. whereas the Russian authorities, in the run-up to the parliamentary and presidential elections, put increased pressure on opposition groups and non-governmental organisations to refrain from any activities directed against the president and the government and to prevent the media from reporting any such activities,
- D. whereas democracy has been weakened in Russia, in particular by the bringing of all

major TV stations and most radio stations under government control, the spread of self-censorship in the print media, new restrictions on the right to organise public demonstrations, the worsening climate for NGOs, harassment of human rights activists, killings of prominent opponents of the Russian Government and increased political control of the judiciary, whilst serious human rights violations in the form of murder, enforced disappearance, torture, hostage-taking and arbitrary detention are still going on in the Chechen Republic,

- E. whereas on 3 March 2008 Other Russia, a coalition of opposition parties, organised a "March of Dissident" to protest against Sunday's presidential elections in Russia,
 - F. whereas the city authorities had refused to authorise the protest saying that the pro-Kremlin Young Russia group had already planned gatherings at every large meeting point in the capital,
 - G. whereas at least 17 opposition protesters were arrested as riot police crushed the rally in Turgenevskaya Square in central Moscow and whereas Nikita Belykh, the head of the Union of Right Forces, was among those detained,
 - H. whereas the protesters - who were heavily outnumbered by the hundreds of riot police and militias wearing helmets and carrying riot shields - were grabbed and forced onto buses,
 - I. whereas the Russian Federation is a member of the Council of Europe and thus has committed itself to that body's shared values, objectives and commitments, as laid down in its Statute and conventions, and in particular to promoting democracy and consolidating democratic stability in Europe,
 - J. whereas the conclusion of a new PCA between the EU and the Russian Federation is of the utmost importance for their future cooperation, in particular with regard to the further development of economic relations, to the further enhancement of security and stability in Europe and to the further strengthening of respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law as the basis of that cooperation,
 - K. whereas the right of free assembly is a fundamental part of the democratic principles and human rights standards that Russia has committed itself to upholding and repeatedly expressed its commitment to; whereas those principles and values are also the basis for the strategic partnership between the EU and Russia,
- 1. Deplores the fact that the run-up to the presidential election in particular was marked by unfair treatment of opposition candidates;
 - 2. Emphasises once again that the current situation in Russia remains a matter of serious concern in connection with respect for human rights, democracy, freedom of expression, xenophobia, racism, the situation of ethnic minorities, the independence of NGOs and the rights of civil society and individuals to challenge the authorities and hold them accountable for their actions;

3. Regrets the fact that the Russian authorities regarded the intended monitoring mission of OSCE/ODIR as an intrusion into internal affairs; voices its strong support for the important work of these missions;
4. Is concerned at the concept of 'sovereign democracy' as it establishes de facto recognition of non-reciprocity;
5. Criticises the disproportionate use of force by police and riot police and militias against the demonstrators in Moscow on 3 March 2008 and calls on the authorities to investigate these incidents and to bring those responsible to justice;
6. Expresses its concern that the Russian State-controlled media often engages in defamatory propaganda campaigns against some Member States in an effort to undermine the unity and solidarity of the EU Member States;
7. Calls for the immediate release of all those demonstrators who are still detained;
8. Condemns the activities of the government-controlled youth movement 'Nashi', which has, inter alia, harassed and attacked diplomatic representatives of Member States and whose activities are also spreading to the Member States;
9. On this occasion, asks the newly elected Russian president, Alexander Medvedev, to reassess the treatment of imprisoned opposition personalities (like Michail Chodorkovski and Platon Lebedev); underlines that this would facilitate the elaboration of an even close partnership between the Russian Federation and the European Union;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and of the Russian Federation and the Council of Europe.