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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 Pasqualina Napoletano, Jan Marinus Wiersma, Hannes Swoboda, Kristian Vigenin, Józef Pinior, Reino Paasilinna

on behalf of the PSE Group

on Russia, attacks on human rights defenders and murder trial of Anna Politkovskaya

European Parliament resolution on Russia, attacks on human rights defenders and murder trial of Anna Politkovskaya

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the present Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, on the one part, and the Russian Federation, on the other part (PCA), and the negotiations initiated this year on a new EU-Russia treaty,
 - having regard to the objective of the EU and Russia, set out in the joint statement issued following the 11th EU-Russia Summit held in St Petersburg on 31 May 2003, of setting up a common economic space, a common space of freedom, security and justice, a common space of cooperation in the field of external security and a common space of research and education, including cultural aspects;
 - having regard to the outcome of the two EU/Russia Summits, which took place in 2008, namely the one in Khanty-Mansiysk and the one in Nice,
 - having regard to the EU-Russia regular consultations on human rights,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on Russia, and in particular to that of 25 October 2006 on the murder of the Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya¹, that of 19 June 2008 on the EU-Russia Summit in Khanty-Mansiysk on 26-27 June 2008²,
 - having regard to the declaration of the presidency of the Council of the European Union on the house search of the premises of the organisation Memorial in St. Petersburg on 4 December 2008,
 - having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas enhanced cooperation and good-neighbourly relations between the EU and Russia are of key importance to the stability, security and prosperity of the whole of Europe,
- B. whereas the conclusion of a Strategic Partnership Agreement between the EU and the Russian Federation remains of the utmost importance for a further development and intensification of the cooperation between the two partners, in particular with regard to matters of political, security, economic and energy cooperation but also with regard to the respect for democratic principles and procedures and for basic human rights,
- C. whereas the Russian Federation is a full Member of the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and has therefore committed itself to the principles of democracy and respect for basic human rights; whereas there remains concern about developments in the Russian Federation with regard to respect for and the

¹ OJ C 313 E, 20.12.2006, p. 271.

² Texts adopted P6_TA(2008)0309

protection of human rights and respect for commonly agreed democratic principles, rules and procedures,

- D. whereas the criminal investigation and the trial following the murder of the journalist Anna Politkovskaya raise serious concerns with regard to transparency and respect for the rule of law,
- E. whereas there are serious concerns on the situation of human rights defenders and also about difficulties faced by the NGOs that are active in the promotion of human rights;
- F. whereas freedom of media, and effective protection of independent journalists and full support for work of human rights organisations are an essential element of the democratic development in a country,
- G. whereas numerous complaints by Russian citizens have been addressed to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, whose rulings substantiate that there are serious breaches of human rights in a number of cases and arbitrariness by the Russian state authorities;
1. Underlines the importance of the continuous exchange of views on human rights with Russia as part of the EU-Russia human rights consultations and demands an improvement in the format of these meetings in order to gain effectiveness, with special attention for common action against racism and xenophobia and allowing equal opportunities for participation by and consultation with human rights NGOs, whether the dialogue takes place in Russia or in an EU Member State;
 2. Emphasises, however, that the current situation in Russia gives rise to concern in terms of respect for human rights, democracy, freedom of expression and the rights of civil society and individuals to challenge authorities and hold them accountable for their actions; underlines the importance of NGOs which are independent of national governments for the development of civil society;
 3. Expresses its concerns about the attacks against the human rights defenders in Russia, in particular with regard to the house search of the premises of the organisation Memorial in St. Petersburg on 4 December 2008;
 4. Notes with concern that a significant number of Russian journalists have been killed because of their professional activity, while only a limited number of these murder investigations led to the conviction of the perpetrators; strongly condemns the harassments, aggressions and any other acts of violence against the journalists and human rights defenders who courageously expose violations of human rights and unacceptable cases of injustice;
 5. Notes that it has been two years since the Russian independent journalist Anna Politkovskaya, who has become a symbol for the freedom of press was murdered; pays tribute to her as an outstanding journalist and a brave and dedicated defender of human rights, who spoke out fearlessly against violence and injustice and campaigned tirelessly to see justice done;

6. Reiterates its call on the Russian authorities to conduct an independent and efficient criminal investigation and trial; expresses its profound concern about the lack of transparency in the way the court is conducting the trial on Politkovskaya murder case, in particular with regard to the decision to hold the trial behind closed doors;
7. Calls for a stepping-up of the EU-Russia Human Rights Consultations and to open this process to an effective input from the European Parliament, the State Duma and civil society and human rights organisations; calls on Russia to fully respect its obligations as a member of the OSCE and of the Council of Europe, including respect for the right of associations and the right to peaceful demonstrations;
8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Parliaments and governments of the Member States, the government and Parliament of the Russian Federation, the OSCE and the Council of Europe.