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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 122 of the Rules of Procedure

on the killings of human rights defenders in Russia

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on behalf of the S&D Group

European Parliament resolution on the killings of human rights defenders in Russia

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 last 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 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, and that of 18 December 2008 on attacks on human rights defenders in Russia and the Anna Politkovskaya murder trial²;
- having regard to the declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union of 12 August 2009 on the murders of Chechen human rights defender Zarema Sadulayeva and her husband Alik Dzhabrailov;
- having regard to Rule 122(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 protection of human rights and respect for commonly agreed democratic principles, rules and procedures,

¹ OJ C 313 E, 20.12.2006, p. 271.

² B6-0641/2008

- D. 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;
- E. whereas Natalya Estemirova, the head of Memorial in Chechnya was abducted on 15 July 2009 in Grozny and found dead in neighbouring Ingushetia; whereas following this murder the work of Memorial in Chechnya has been suspended;
- F. whereas on 10 August 2009, Chechen civil society activists Zarema Sadulayeva and her husband, Alik Dzhabraïlov, working for the humanitarian organisation 'Save the Generation', were abducted from their office in Grozny and found murdered the next day;
- G. 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 functioning democracy;
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. Strongly condemns the attacks against the human rights defenders in Russia, in particular the recent abductions and murders of Natalya Estemirova, Zarema Sadulayeva and Alik Dzhabraïlov;
 4. Calls on the Russian authorities to conduct an efficient criminal investigation in the above-mentioned cases and bring to justice those responsible for these crimes;
 5. Expresses its grave concern about the worsening climate for human rights in Russia, in particular the harassments, aggressions and any other acts of violence against the journalists and human rights defenders; calls on Russian authorities to undertake adequate measures in order to curb intimidation and violence towards human rights defenders and independent journalists that are an important element of the civil society in every democratic country;
 6. Welcomes the return of the confiscated archive of the organisation Memorial in St. Petersburg following the raid on 4 December 2008;
 7. Welcomes Russia's Supreme Court order of 3 September 2009 for a new effort to catch those who planned and carried out the killing of the journalist Anna Politkovskaya; reiterates its call on the Russian authorities to conduct an transparent, independent and efficient criminal investigation and trial;

8. 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;
9. 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.