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Plenary sitting

8.2.2012

B7-0052/2012

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 110(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the political situation in Russia (2012/2505(RSP))

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on behalf of the S&D Group

European Parliament resolution on the political situation in Russia (2012/2505(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the Russian Federation, which entered into force in 1997 and has been extended pending its replacement by a new agreement,
 - having regard to the ongoing negotiations for a new agreement providing a new comprehensive framework for EU-Russia relations, as well as to the ‘Partnership for Modernization’ initiated in 2010,
 - having regard to its previous reports and resolutions on Russia, in particular its resolutions of 14 December 2011¹ on the State Duma election and of 7 July 2011² on Preparations for the Russian State Duma elections in December 2011,
 - having regard to the OSCE/ODIHR Final Observation Report of 12 January on the State Duma elections of 4 December 2011,
 - having regard to the Council of Europe Parliamentary Committee’s (PACE) final observation report of 23 January 2012 of the Russian parliamentary elections and its statement of the post-election delegation to Russia of 21 January 2012,
 - having regard to the EU-Russia Consultations on Human Rights, particularly the latest meeting held in this context on the 29 November 2011,
 - having regard to the Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton, on the Duma elections in the Russian Federation of 6 December 2011, her speeches of 14 December 2011 in Strasbourg on the EU-Russia Summit and of 1 February 2011 on the political situation in Russia,
 - having regard to the Statement of the President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy of 15 December 2011 following the EU-Russia Summit,
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the relations between the EU and Russia are constantly developing over the past decades, leading to a deep and comprehensive interdependency, which is bound to increase even more in the future;
- B. whereas the conclusion of a Strategic Partnership Agreement between the EU and the Russian Federation remains of the utmost importance for the further development and intensification of cooperation between the two partners;

¹ Text adopted, P7_TA(2011)0575.

² Text adopted, P7_TA(2011)0335.

- C. 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, electoral rules and procedures; 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 human rights;
- D. whereas on 12 April 2011 the European Court of Human Rights ruled against the cumbersome registration procedures for political parties in Russia, which do not comply with the election standards set by the Council of Europe and the OSCE; whereas limiting the registration for political parties and candidates restrains political competition and pluralism in Russia;
- E. whereas despite recently limited initiatives to improve election laws, the general rules remain overly complex and in some cases vague leading to inconsistent application of the legal basis;
- F. whereas according to the OSCE/ODIHR Final Observation Report the DUMA elections of 4 December 2011 did not fully respect standards of free and fair elections and were marked by convergence between state and governing party including the lack of independence of the election administration, partiality of the media and state interference at different levels; whereas according to the report the DUMA elections have brought about a high number of procedural violations, of apparent manipulation and serious indications of ballot box stuffing;
- G. whereas with a number of mass demonstrations since the Duma elections on 4 December 2011 the Russian people have expressed their will for more democracy and a comprehensive reform of the electoral system, particularly the so called ‘white ribbon’ demonstrators;
- H. whereas political pluralism is a cornerstone of democracy and modern society, and a source of political legitimacy; whereas the preparations for presidential elections need to guarantee a free and fair process with equal chances for all candidates;
1. Takes note of the reports of the OSCE/ODIHR and the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly with regard to the Duma elections stating that the elections have not fulfilled election standards as defined by the OSCE and were marked by the convergence of the state and governing party, by procedural violations, apparent manipulation and lack of independence of the election administration;
 2. Calls on the Russian authorities to continue to investigate comprehensively and transparently into all reports of fraud and intimidation with a view to sanctioning those found responsible and to rerun the voting where irregularities have been proven; stresses that Russia’s electoral legislation provides for appeal and rectification; points out however that the administration of complaints by the Central Election Committee has lacked transparency and did not address complaints effectively and in a timely manner;
 3. Welcomes President Medvedev’s announcement for comprehensive reforms of the political system including the much needed simplification of rules governing the

registration of political parties; calls for serious commitment to also address the problems of media freedom, freedom of assembly and expression; reiterates the EU's readiness to cooperate with Russia in every possible way, including in the framework provided by the Partnership for Modernisation, to improve the respect of human and fundamental rights and the effectiveness of an independent rule of law system in Russia;

4. Stresses that the peaceful demonstrations in Russia express the will of the Russian people for more democracy; calls on the Russian authorities to take the recent rallies as opportunity to answer the call of the Russian people for more democracy, to reform electoral laws, to comply with Council of Europe and OSCE standards in cooperation with Venice Commission;
5. Recalls that the restrictions on political pluralism during the preparation of the DUMA elections was one of the key flaws of those elections; expresses its concern regarding the exclusion of opposition candidates from standing for presidential elections on 4 March 2012 which is once more undermining political competition and pluralism;
6. Urges the Russian authorities to engage in dialogue with the opposition and to review its decision to deny registration for the presidential election campaign to opposition leader Grigory Yavlinsky; calls on the Russian authorities to guarantee free, fair and democratic presidential elections in March with equal opportunities for all candidates;
7. Calls on the OSCE and the Council of Europe to follow up on the investigations into irregularities as well as to closely monitor the preparation of the presidential elections and enforcement of the electoral rules, as agreed already by the Russian authorities;
8. Notes that 600 international observers are expected to monitor the Russian presidential election (there will be observers from OSCE/ODIHR, the PACE, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the CIS); stresses that international and national election observation should be fully deployed, and to avoid interference and hindrance from the Russian authorities, as it was reported in the case of the Duma elections;
9. Expresses its concern regarding the prolonging criminal investigation and process in the case of death of Sergei Magnitsky; calls for a rapid clarification of this tragic death and the punishment of the guilty;
10. Strongly urge Russia to join the international consensus, and allow the Security Council to act on the basis of the Arab League proposals in solving the Syrian crisis; stresses that, as a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council, Russia needs to take its responsibility for international peace and security seriously;
11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Government and Parliament of the Russian Federation, the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.