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Plenary sitting

9.12.2013

B7-0567/2013

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 outcome of the Vilnius Summit and the future of the Eastern Partnership, in particular as regards Ukraine
(2013/2983(RSP))

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on behalf of the S&D Group

European Parliament resolution on the outcome of the Vilnius Summit and the future of the Eastern Partnership, in particular as regards Ukraine (2013/2983(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between the European Union and Ukraine, which entered into force on 1 March 1998, and to the Association Agreement (AA), including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), that was negotiated during the 2007-2011 period and initialled in 2012, with a view to replacing the PCA,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on Ukraine, on the Eastern Partnership and on the European Neighbourhood Policy, in particular the most recent ones of 13 December 2012¹, 12 September 2013² and 23 October 2013³,
 - having regard to the Joint Statement of the EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Cooperation Committee of 14 November 2013,
 - having regard to the Joint Statement by the President of the Commission, José Manuel Barroso, and the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, on Ukraine of 25 November 2013,
 - having regard to the Joint Statement of 30 November 2013 by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, and Commissioner Štefan Füle on the events of 29 November 2013 in Ukraine,
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas at the Vilnius Eastern Partnership Summit Ukraine and all the other participants reconfirmed their commitment to the principles of international law and to fundamental values, such as democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights;
- B. whereas Ukraine is a country of strategic importance to the EU and an indispensable partner within the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership; whereas, however, the Ukrainian Government decided not to sign the AA/DCFTA during the Vilnius Eastern Partnership Summit as expected;
- C. whereas the Ukrainian Government's decision to suspend the process of preparation for the signing of the AA/DCFTA has aroused discontent and protest within the country; whereas, in this context, the Ukrainian police made disproportionate use of violence against peaceful pro-EU demonstrators;

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0507.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0383.

³ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0446.

- D. whereas, during a telephone conversation between the President of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich, and the President of the Commission, José Manuel Barroso, that took place on 2 December 2013, it was agreed that a peaceful political solution was the only way out of the current situation, and whereas the Ukrainian President undertook to investigate the use of force and to inform the public of the results; whereas they agreed that talks on some aspects of the AA/DCFTA would be resumed;
1. Welcomes the initialling of Association Agreements with Georgia and Moldova, which sets a clear European agenda for these two countries; looks forward to the signing and implementation of these agreements as soon as possible; calls on the Commission, in this connection, to facilitate the implementation of these agreements and to assist the two countries' respective authorities so that some tangible positive effects and benefits covered by the agreements can be delivered in the short term to their citizens;
 2. Views as regrettable the decision of the Ukrainian Government not to sign the AA/DCFTA with the EU during the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius, despite the clear will on the EU side to continue with the association process, provided the conditions are met; views this decision as a major missed opportunity in EU-Ukraine relations and for Ukraine's aspirations, and reiterates its view that a deepening of relations between the EU and Ukraine and the fact of offering Ukraine a European perspective are of interest to both parties;
 3. Recalls that several channels of communication, and especially the mission led by Presidents Cox and Kwasniewski, are open between the EU and Ukraine, and therefore reiterates that the concerns raised by the Ukrainian authorities to justify this last-minute decision to suspend should have been voiced earlier so as to allow them to be addressed;
 4. Understands that this decision was made under strong pressure from Russia, and in the context of Ukraine's difficult fiscal and economic situation; rejects the logic of a zero-sum game as a paradigm for EU-Ukraine-Russia relations; reiterates, in this regard, its firm condemnation of the unacceptable political and economic pressure, coupled with threats of trade sanctions, exerted by Russia on Ukraine, Armenia, Georgia and Moldova;
 5. Underlines the fact that the proposal to sign this Association Agreement is still valid and that the EU stands ready to sign it, as long as the benchmarks, as defined by the Foreign Affairs Council of December 2012, are met; recalls that the agreement has already been initialled by the Ukrainian authorities and that the EU, following an extensive process of negotiation involving both sides on an equal footing, will not renegotiate its full content;
 6. Reiterates that this agreement is of strictly bilateral concern between the two parties, and rejects very firmly any proposal to associate a third party in the process;
 7. Underlines the need to determine new ways of constructively engaging Russia in initiatives that reflect common interests of a secure, stable and prosperous European neighbourhood in order to finally overcome obsolete thinking in terms of spheres of influence;
 8. Expresses its full solidarity with those demonstrating for a European future; calls on the Ukrainian authorities to fully respect people's civil rights and the fundamental freedom of

assembly and peaceful protest; strongly condemns the use of brutal force against peaceful demonstrations, and stresses the need for prompt, effective and independent investigation, and for prosecution of those found guilty; underlines Ukraine's international obligations in this regard; stresses that such measures clearly stand against the fundamental principles of freedom of assembly and expression, and are therefore in breach of universal and European values; recalls that, in view of Ukraine's position as the incumbent Chair of the OSCE, its record on the defence and promotion of these values is being even more closely scrutinised;

9. Warns against the danger of violent escalation, which may have adverse consequences for the country's stability and its European perspective; urges the government to engage in political dialogue with the opposition and with civil society organisations; calls on all the country's political parties to exercise restraint and to cooperate with a view to achieving a peaceful political solution to the crisis; stresses that the Verkhovna Rada, as a legitimately elected body, should be a place of dialogue and exchange of views on the future orientation of Ukraine, which reflects the demands of people protesting in the Euromaidan; declares its readiness to support the launch of a new, fully fledged EU mediation mission to negotiate a peaceful exit from the crisis;
10. Reconfirms its full support for Ukraine's European aspirations; takes note of the recent statements by Ukrainian officials that the country's course towards European integration in general and association with the EU in particular remains unchanged; supports wholeheartedly the European aspirations of Ukrainian citizens, as expressed in ongoing demonstrations in the Euromaidan in Kiev and other cities all over Ukraine;
11. Recalls that the signing of the Association Agreement is not an end in itself, but rather a means to achieving long-term stability and socioeconomic progress, and sustainable and systemic transformation, and that it therefore requires true commitment to its proper and prompt implementation; calls on the EU to negotiate a concrete roadmap for implementation with the Ukrainian authorities;
12. Calls on the Commission, the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Member States to ensure, once the conditions are met, a generous and immediate provisional application of the agreement, coupled with swiftly applicable macroeconomic support and EU support for an agreement between the International Monetary Fund and Ukraine; calls on the Commission and the Council to develop a programme to support structural reform and increased competitiveness of Ukraine's economy so as to assist the full implementation of the DCFTA;
13. Regrets the fact that after more than three years of successfully completed AA/DCFTA negotiations, the Armenian authorities decided instead to join the Customs Union, following Russian pressure; reminds the Armenian authorities that the protests and demonstrations against this decision are an expression of the free will of the country's citizens and that they need to be respected under the international commitments into which Armenia has entered; recalls, in this connection, that persecution and detentions are violations of the basic rights of assembly and expression and that repressive measures run counter to recent rhetoric of commitment to shared values with the EU; calls on the Government of Armenia to engage in an inclusive dialogue with civil society on the

country's future direction;

14. Welcomes the signing of the visa facilitation agreement between the EU and Azerbaijan; is concerned at the crackdown on dissent that has taken place in the country following the presidential elections of October 2013, as manifested in continuing detention and fresh arrests of opposition activists, harassment of independent NGOs and media, dismissals of the government's critics from their jobs on the basis solely of their political activities; urges the Azerbaijani parliament to reconsider its decision to suspend its participation in the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly, following the adoption of Parliament's resolution of 23 October 2013;
15. Believes that the outcome and overall context of the Vilnius Summit highlight the need for the EU to articulate a more strategic and flexible policy in support of the European choice of its Eastern partners, using the full range of tools at its disposal, such as macroeconomic assistance, easing of trade regimes, projects to enhance energy security and economic modernisation, and swift implementation of visa liberalisation, in line with European values and interests; welcomes, in this context, the Commission's proposal for visa-free travel for Moldovan citizens holding biometric passports, and hopes to see swift progress in the visa liberalisation process with Georgia, Ukraine and Armenia;
16. Recalls that although relations between the EU and Belarus are at a critical stage, both sides need to show readiness to create the conditions for visa facilitation for Belarusian citizens, as well as for intensifying people-to-people contacts; reiterates that the existence of political prisoners runs counter to core EU values and that development and cooperation are dependent on improving the situation regarding politically motivated arrests and imprisonment;
17. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the European External Action Service (EEAS), the Council, the Commission, the Member States, the President, Government and Parliament of Ukraine and the Parliamentary Assemblies of the Council of Europe and the OSCE.