

WRITTEN QUESTION P-5273/06
by Inese Vaidere (UEN)
to the Commission

Subject: Commission's activities and proposals for the new EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) in the context of the human rights situation in Russia

The situation in relation to democracy, human rights and the rule of law, as well as freedom of speech, continues to deteriorate in Russia.

The DROI subcommittee has frequently received reports of specific instances of the deteriorating situation in Russia, notably:

- significant restrictions of freedom of speech and the press;
- growing restrictions on civil society organisations;
- increasing intimidation of political opponents and murders of journalists;
- use of violence as an element of the political system;
- lack of action by the Russian authorities to fight racism and xenophobia and to bring those responsible for hate crimes to justice;
- ongoing anti-Georgian campaign on the territory of Russia;
- continuous violations of fundamental and human rights in Chechnya etc.

The current EU - Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) will expire at the end of 2007.

Will the Commission use the new PCA as an opportunity to set more strict obligations to Russia regarding the situation of democracy, human rights and freedom of expression?

What specific elements and conditions, in addition to the human rights clause, will the Commission propose to be included in the new PCA in order to achieve progress on the human rights situation in Russia?