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B5-0621/2001 }
B5-0629/2001 }
B5-0637/2001 }
B5-0647/2001 }
B5-0662/2001 }
RC1

JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 50(5) of the Rules of Procedure by

- John Bowis and Bernd Posselt on behalf of the PPE-DE Group
- Johannes Swoboda, Jannis Sakellariou, Carlos Lage, and Ioannis Koukiadis on behalf of the PSE Group
- Bertel Haarder on behalf of the ELDR Group
- Bart Staes on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group
- Antonio Mussa on behalf of the UEN Group

replacing the motions by the following groups:

- ELDR (B5-00621/2001),
- PPE-DE (B5-0629/2001),
- UEN (B5-0637/2001),
- PSE (B5-0647/2001),
- Verts/ALE (B5-0662/2001),

on public health problems in Uzbekistan

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European Parliament resolution on public health problems in Uzbekistan

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 12 March 1999 giving assent to the conclusion of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Uzbekistan, of the other part,
 - having regard to the above-mentioned agreement,
 - having regard to the aid provided by the European Union to Uzbekistan in the framework of TACIS and ECHO,
 - having regard to Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 giving ECHO a mandate to provide emergency aid and help victims of natural disasters,
 - having regard to the report of its Delegation for relations with Uzbekistan, following its recent visit to Uzbekistan,
 - having regard to the current political situation following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in the USA and the resulting strategic position of Uzbekistan on the northern frontier of Afghanistan,
- A. whereas health conditions are rapidly deteriorating in Uzbekistan, notably in Karakalpakstan and the Khorezm region, largely due to the environmental disaster caused by the progressive drying-up of the Aral Sea and the absence of sewage facilities in almost all rural areas and about half of the urban areas,
- B. whereas one of the most serious consequences of this situation is the lack of access to drinking water for the local population, about 3.5 million people are directly affected by the crisis and, despite a number of emergency measures already undertaken, the Uzbek authorities are not in position to cope with the magnitude of the disaster,
- C. whereas, however, the measures taken at national level to counter the effects of an unprecedented environmental disaster concerning all countries in Central Asia, affecting more than 35 million people and having negative effects on the ecosystem in general have been inadequate,
- D. mindful of the requests made by the government of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the European Union, the World Bank, the United Nations and the whole international community for the implementation of a programme of emergency aid for the victims of this environmental disaster, whose numbers are set to increase further over the next few months,
- E. whereas the control of epidemics cannot be guaranteed in Central Asia owing to a lack of resources, health facilities and medical personnel specialised in coping with emergencies,

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and having regard to the numerous cases of bubonic plague, anthrax and other diseases,

- F. alarmed by the news confirming the outbreak of the Black Death in Central Asia,
 - G. having regard to the abandonment of the former Soviet chemical and bacteriological weapons research laboratories on Vozrozhdenye Island in the Aral Sea and the state of total abandonment of stocks containing bacteria of bubonic plague, brucellosis, Siberian smallpox and other pathogenic agents,
 - H. whereas Uzbekistan has a strategic role to play in Central Asia, given its border with northern Afghanistan, and whereas many Afghan refugees are expected to seek asylum in Uzbekistan,
1. Calls on the Commission, in the framework of ECHO, and on the Member States to provide adequate aid for the population of Uzbekistan, especially drinking water and food supplies;
 2. Considers that one of the priority programmes under TACIS should consist in limiting the ecological deterioration of the Aral Sea, and invites the Uzbek authorities to make the improvement of the local ecosystem a part of their policy;
 3. Calls also for the adoption of more stringent measures for oil companies working in the area of the Aral Sea, so as to limit more devastating environmental damage in the future;
 4. Takes the view that the Commission must play a significant part in drawing up a plan to combat the spread of infectious diseases affecting local populations and take such measures as appear necessary to deal with the dramatic consequences of the increasing dilapidation of health facilities in the regions concerned;
 5. Calls for steps to be taken to address and resolve the problem of the stocks of contaminated waste at former Soviet laboratories with the help of international specialists;
 6. Instructs its President to forward the present resolution to the Council, the Commission and the government of Uzbekistan.