

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Session document

8.6.2005

B6-0370/2005 }
B6-0371/2005 }
B6-0372/2005 }
B6-0373/2005 }
B6-0374/2005 }
B6-0377/2005 } RC1

JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 103(4) of the Rules of Procedure, by

- Armin Laschet, Elisabeth Jeggle and Albert Jan Maat, on behalf of the PPE-DE Group
- Jan Marinus Wiersma and Bernadette Bourzai, on behalf of the PSE Group
- Ona Juknevičienė, on behalf of the ALDE Group
- Cem Özdemir and Bart Staes, on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group
- André Brie, on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group
- Anna Elzbieta Fotyga and Inese Vaidere, on behalf of the UEN Group

replacing the motions by the following groups:

- Verts/ALE (B6-0370/2005)
- GUE/NGL (B6-0371/2005)
- ALDE (B6-0372/2005)
- PSE (B6-0373/2005)
- PPE-DE (B6-0374/2005)
- UEN (B6-0377/2005)

on Uzbekistan

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PE 357.502v01-00}
PE 357.503v01-00}
PE 357.504v01-00}
PE 357.505v01-00}
PE 357.506v01-00}
PE 357.509v01-00} RC1

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European Parliament resolution on Uzbekistan

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States and the Republic of Uzbekistan, which entered into force on 1 July 1999,
 - having regard to its earlier resolutions concerning the human rights and democracy situation in Uzbekistan and the countries of Central Asia,
 - having regard to the conclusions of the sixth meeting of the EU-Uzbekistan Cooperation Council, which took place on 1 February 2005 in Brussels,
 - having regard to the conclusions of the Council meeting of 23-24 May 2005 concerning recent events in Uzbekistan and, in particular, in and around the eastern city of Andijan,
 - having regard to the statement made by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, asking for an independent international investigation into the causes and circumstances of the incidents in Uzbekistan's eastern city of Andijan,
 - having regard to the statement of 20 May 2005 by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on the situation in Uzbekistan,
 - having regard to Rule 103(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas, according to eyewitnesses, several hundred people were killed on 13 May 2005 in the eastern Uzbek city of Andijan when government troops opened fire on a protest march against the imprisonment of 23 local businessmen,
- B. whereas Uzbek President Islam Karimov blamed the violence on Islamist groups, denying that security forces had opened fire on unarmed civilians, and putting the death toll at only 169, most of them 'Islamic extremist terrorists',
- C. whereas at the same time more than 500 people fled to Uzbekistan and found refuge at Barash camp in Kyrgyzstan on the bank of the river that marks the Uzbek-Kyrgyz border,
- D. whereas many people were arrested during and after the events in Andijan and are still in custody,
- E. whereas Andijan residents still fear government retribution for speaking about the events, and the town remains essentially closed to journalists and human rights investigators, while the government has issued instructions to the Uzbek media on how to cover events related to the violence and has blocked access to an increasing number of foreign media websites,
- F. extremely concerned about the ongoing disappearances of injured people from hospitals and about the arbitrary arrests, detentions and physical attacks on human rights activists who

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have been denouncing and investigating the indiscriminate use of force against civilians,

- G. whereas the United Nations, supported by, among others, the Council of the European Union, the OSCE and NATO, has called urgently for an independent investigation into the causes and circumstances of the events in Andijan; whereas such an inquiry is absolutely necessary to shed light on the events and to address them properly in the interests of stability in the region; noting the embarrassing support for the action of the government by the Russian Federation and China,
- H. whereas the Uzbek authorities have so far refused to respond to this call for an international, independent inquiry and have even rejected any contact with representatives of the international community to discuss launching such an enquiry,
- I. whereas the Uzbek government has a long-standing record of torture, ill-treatment and serious human rights abuses against detainees, as well as harsh treatment of human rights activists and political opponents,
- J. acknowledging the role played by Uzbekistan in fighting international terrorism but stressing the crucial need to pursue this fight by legal means which do not oppress the entire society and neglect human rights,
- K. whereas the Uzbek authorities often claim that opponents to the government line are religious extremists from the Ferghana valley want to overthrow his government and set up an Islamic caliphate across Central Asia, despite the fact that Uzbek society is largely secular and that the limited religious extremism is rather fuelled by social injustice,
- L. whereas the leaders of several human rights groups in Uzbekistan have reported that the massacre in Andijan was followed by widespread repressive measures against human rights defenders, members of opposition parties and otherwise politically active Uzbek citizens and that they have been subjected to arrest and physical harassment by the Uzbek regime,
- M. whereas the Uzbek President, Mr Karimov, has been the leader of the country since it gained its independence in 1989 and his regime has made no substantial effort to bring about the necessary political, social and economic reforms and have made Uzbekistan one of the most autocratic regimes in Central Asia,
- N. whereas civil society in Central Asia, including Uzbekistan, is increasingly demanding a more open society, where individual freedoms and human rights are fully respected, as well as moves towards democracy,
- O. whereas EU cooperation can be provided only if based on a genuine policy promoting human rights on the part of the beneficiaries,
- 1. Strongly condemns the excessive, brutal and indiscriminate use of force by the Uzbek security forces and urges the Uzbek authorities to bring those responsible for the massacre in Andijan to trial;

2. Deeply regrets the loss of hundreds of lives and expresses its profound sympathy with the people who have suffered as a consequence of the violence used by Uzbekistan's security forces;
3. Urges the Uzbek authorities to respond immediately to the international calls for an independent international inquiry into the events and to take the necessary steps to make this investigation possible;
4. Stresses that the Uzbek government, by continuing to refuse an international inquiry, is failing to meet even its most basic obligations under the PCA's human rights and democracy clause;
5. Calls on the Council and the Commission to channel EU aid and cooperation programmes to Uzbekistan through independent NGOs, to reinforce TACIS-democracy programmes and to suspend direct aid to government bodies, until a genuine international and independent investigation is carried out with full support from the Uzbek authorities and until widespread human rights abuses are stopped;
6. Expresses its deep concern about the fate of those who have sought refuge on the Kyrgyz border and urges Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan to ensure full compliance with international conventions on displaced persons and refugees; urges the Council and Commission to provide humanitarian assistance in close cooperation with the UN agencies and other international organisations, and calls upon the Uzbek authorities to grant immediate access to the area for this assistance;
7. Urges the Uzbek authorities immediately to stop the persecution and harassment of opposition politicians, human rights defenders, independent journalists and other Uzbek citizens; demands that those who were arrested during and after the events in Andijan be released immediately;
8. Takes the view that the fight against terrorism must be carried out in compliance with international conventions and OSCE commitments and that it must not in any way be used as a justification to clamp down on political opponents, violate human rights and restrict civil liberties;
9. Calls on the US Administration to suspend its negotiations with the Uzbek Government regarding a formal, long-term agreement that would allow the United States to maintain its military base in Uzbekistan and provide the Uzbek government with considerable financial benefits, and to consider other alternatives in the region;
10. Underlines the importance of addressing the root causes of the instability in the region and urges the Uzbek authorities to carry out domestic reforms, which are essential for economic development and the achievement of democracy and stability in the country; calls upon the Council and Commission to support such reforms effectively and in close coordination with other relevant international actors;

11. Calls in particular on the Government of Uzbekistan to take tangible steps towards the abolition of the death penalty, to strengthen the independence of the judiciary, to bring national legislation on the mass media into line with international requirements and standards, to end censorship, to stop pressurising independent journalists and mass media editors, and to create the conditions for making freedom of speech a reality;
12. Urges the Uzbek Government to revise and simplify the process of registration for NGOs, including foreign representations, and to introduce and adopt amendments reducing control by state organs and the Ministry of Justice over NGOs' activities;
13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the OSCE, and the Presidents, Governments and Parliaments of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, the United States and China.