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B6-0451/2007 }
B6-0456/2007 }
B6-0466/2007 }
B6-0471/2007 } RC1

JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 115(5) of the Rules of Procedure, by

- Pasqualina Napoletano, on behalf of the PSE Group
- Ona Juknevičienė and Marios Matsakis, on behalf of the ALDE Group
- Cem Özdemir and Hélène Flautre, on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group
- André Brie and Giusto Catania, on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

replacing the motions by the following groups:

- PSE (B6-0451/2007)
- Verts/ALE (B6-0456/2007)
- ALDE (B6-0466/2007)
- GUE/NGL (B6-0471/2007)

on Uzbekistan

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PE396.122v01.00}
PE396.132v01.00}
PE396.137v01.00} RC1

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European Parliament resolution on Uzbekistan

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement⁽¹⁾ 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 General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) of 15 and 16 October 2007,
 - having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the Uzbek Government is persisting in its policy of torture, ill-treatment and serious human rights abuses against detainees, as well as the harsh treatment of human rights activists and political opponents,
- B. whereas President Karimov has been the leader of Uzbekistan since the country gained independence in 1989 and whereas his regime has consolidated his personal power and neglected to implement any political, social and economic reforms,
- C. whereas the General Affairs and External Relation Council (GAERC) of 15 and 16 October 2007 decided not to extend the scope of the EU sanctions policy on Uzbekistan and agreed on the suspension for six months of some of the visa restrictions on senior Uzbek officials,
- D. whereas Mark Weil, founder and art director of the independent Ilkhom Theatre, was murdered in Tashkent on 9 September 2007; whereas the Ilkhom Theatre is one of the very few remaining cultural opposition voices in the country,
- E. whereas the journalist and critic of the Uzbek regime Alisher Saipov was murdered in the Kirgiz city of Osh on 24 October 2007,
- F. whereas Mutabar Tadjibaeva, chairperson of the non-violent human rights organisation Plammenoe Serdtse, was arrested in Ferghana city on 7 October 2005 and is still being kept in solitary confinement in Tashkent, together with many other human rights defenders, under harsh conditions despite the rapid deterioration of their health,
- G. whereas the President of the European Parliament, in his letters to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan of 15 March 2007 and 3 July 2007, demanded the immediate unconditional release of 13 human right defenders,
- H. whereas, following the killing by government troops of several hundred civilians in Andijan on 13 May 2005, the Uzbek authorities have on numerous occasions refused to respond to UN, OSCE, NATO and EU calls for an independent investigation into the causes of the events,

- I. whereas EU experts made a very brief visit to Andijan after the massacre but no proper information was ever communicated about their findings,
- J. whereas civil society in Uzbekistan is demanding a more open society, where individual freedoms and human rights are fully respected, as well as a move towards democracy, while the registration and activity of NGOs is being increasingly restricted by the authorities,
- K. concerned by the risk that the proposed EU Annual Action Programme for Uzbekistan on support to the Uzbek Parliament and NGO Partnership may not meet the conditions for ensuring positive impact and would contribute to supporting the government's direct control over civil society through additional administrative and financial requirements,
1. Deplores the fact that, in spite of several calls from the international community, including the OSCE and the EU, Uzbekistan is not showing any signs of significant change in its systematic policy of repression of independent organisations, free media and individual rights, and today ranks as one of the fiercest authoritarian regimes in Asia;
 2. Calls on the Council and the Commission to implement fully the democratic clause included in the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States and the Republic of Uzbekistan, and thereby to give proper consideration to the suspension of such an agreement, to extend the visa restrictions for senior government officials and to freeze their assets in Europe in overseas European banks;
 3. Questions the decision to suspend for six months some of the visa restrictions that form part of the EU sanctions against the country; invites the Commission and the Council to proceed in six months' time to a serious assessment of the impact of such a decision and to review the overall human rights situation in the country;
 4. Reiterates the call for total vigilance to be exercised until it is certain that an international mission of inquiry has thrown full light on the responsibility of the Uzbek Government in the violent events in Andijan;
 5. Notes that the absence of an independent international inquiry into the 2005 Andijan massacre and the absence of any improvement in the human rights situation in Uzbekistan – the conditions laid down by the EU for sanctions to be lifted – have logically led to the sanctions against Uzbekistan being extended;
 6. Is indignant at the Council's approval of the alleged progress made on human rights in Uzbekistan; recalls once more that the holding of a dialogue on human rights and experts' meetings on Andijan, the only examples of which in any case took place before sanctions were extended in May 2007, do not in themselves constitute progress and cannot be used as a reason for sanctions to be lifted;
 7. Deplores the fact that the suspension of visa restrictions for six months could be interpreted as a lack of firmness on the part of the EU and presented as a diplomatic victory by President Karimov; calls urgently on all the Member States to remind the Uzbek authorities that, in accordance with the conclusions of the Council, the EU will not compromise on respect for human rights or on the holding of an independent international inquiry on Andijan, and that the suspension of visa restrictions is a new strategy to help bring about change in the country,

and not a way of gradually abandoning the sanctions regime;

8. Recalls in this connection that the visa restrictions will be automatically reestablished in six months' time without any need for a Council decision unless all of the conditions laid down by the Council have been met in their entirety;
9. Welcomes the fact that that the Council has introduced specific conditions which have to be met within the next six months in order for the visa restriction suspension to be maintained, namely:
 - (a) full implementation of Uzbekistan's international obligations relating to human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law;
 - (b) full unimpeded access by relevant international bodies to prisoners;
 - (c) effective engagement with the UN Special Rapporteur on Uzbekistan;
 - (d) allowing all NGOs, including Human Rights Watch, to operate without constraint in Uzbekistan;
 - (e) release of human rights defenders from detention and cessation of their harassment;
 - (f) positive engagement with human rights issues in the context of the forthcoming EU-Uzbekistan Cooperation Committee; and
 - (g) continuation of reform of the judiciary, law enforcement and police law;
10. Takes the view that these conditions include effective cooperation with all the United Nations Special Rapporteurs on Human Rights, simplification of the procedures for registration and recognition of non-governmental organisations, and meeting the demand issued by the President of the European Parliament for the immediate, unconditional release 13 human rights defenders: Saidjahon Zainabidinov, Mutabar Tojibaeva, Nosim Isakov, Norboi Kholjigitov, Abdusattor Irzaev, Habibulla Okpulatov, Azam Formonov, Alisher Karamatov, Mamarajab Nazarov, Dilmurad Mukhiddinov, Rasul Khudainasarov, Bobumurod Mavlanov, and Ulugbek Kattabekov ;
11. Urges the Uzbek authorities to release Mutabar Tadjibaeva and to allow her immediate access to medical treatment, family visits and lawyers;
12. Considers that the role played by Uzbekistan in fighting international terrorism is not a justification for oppressing society and neglecting human rights, and takes the view that such a policy can only bring instability and strengthen fundamentalist opposition;
13. Condemns the killing of theatre director Mark Weil, and considers such a murder as a further instance of political violence and impunity vis-à-vis anybody who stands against the regime;
14. Asks for precise information regarding the current state of the inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the death of the theatre director Mark Weil, and expects the truth about those

responsible to be made public;

15. Firmly condemns the killing of Alisher Saipov, expresses its condolences to the family of the victim and calls on the Kirgiz authorities to carry out a full and thorough investigation of the murder and to bring those responsible for the crime to justice;
16. Reiterates its call to the Government of Uzbekistan to take tangible steps towards economic reforms, the eventual abolition of the death penalty and the independence of the judiciary, to bring national legislation on the mass media into line with international requirements and standards, and to end censorship;
17. Reiterates its call to the Uzbek authorities to stop immediately the persecution and harassment of opposition politicians, human rights defenders, independent journalists and other Uzbek citizens, and to allow a genuine process of reform and democratisation; stresses that by persisting in such oppressive policies Uzbekistan is allowing itself to be ranked as one of the most backward countries in the international community;
18. Calls on the EU institutions, the Member States and the EU Special Representative for Central Asia to do everything possible to ensure the credibility and coherence of the Union's policy vis-à-vis Uzbekistan, inter alia by giving absolute priority to the objective of promoting human rights in all its actions and by ensuring that projects in Uzbekistan funded under the Union's various financial instruments are consistent with this objective;
19. Is relieved that the annual action programme envisaged by the Commission under the Development Cooperation Instrument of support for the Uzbek Parliament and of 'partnership with non-governmental organisations' has been withdrawn for 2007, calls on the Commission to consult the European Parliament when drawing up the programmes for 2008, and recalls the obligation to consult it on their adoption; calls also on the Commission to look at new possibilities, despite a particularly difficult context, of implementing projects aimed at supporting the efforts of the various components of civil society to promote human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights;
20. Hopes that the notable efforts at respectability made by the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Brussels by taking part in numerous cultural activities reflect the desire for freedom of speech that can also be seen in cultural milieux, including the press, in Uzbekistan itself;
21. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission, the EU Special rapporteur for Central Asia, the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the OSCE, and the President, Government and Parliament of Uzbekistan.