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EU-Russia Summit 26-27 June 2008

European Parliament resolution of 19 June 2008 on the EU-Russia Summit of 26-27 June 2008 in Khanty-Mansiysk

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Russian Federation, of the other part¹, which entered into force in 1997 and expired in 2007,
 - having regard to the decisions of the General Affairs Council of 26 May 2008 approving the negotiating directives for an agreement that will provide a new comprehensive framework for the EU's relations with Russia,
 - having regard to the objective of the EU and Russia, set out in the joint statement issued following the St Petersburg Summit held on 31 May 2003, to set up a common economic space, a common space of freedom, security and justice, a space of cooperation in the field of external security and a space of research and education, including cultural aspects,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on EU relations with Russia, and in particular its resolution of 14 November 2007 on the EU-Russia Summit² held in Mafra, Portugal, on 26 October 2007),
 - having regard to the EU-Russia human rights consultations, and in particular their seventh round on 17 April 2008 covering freedom of the media, expression and assembly, especially in the light of the recent parliamentary and presidential elections, the functioning of civil society, the rights of persons belonging to minorities, combating racism and xenophobia, and the rights of children,
 - having regard to the 2007 progress report on the implementation of the EU-Russia Common Spaces, prepared by the Commission and published in March 2008,
 - having regard to the outcome of the eighth meeting of the EU-Russia Permanent Partnership Council on Freedom, Security and Justice held in St Petersburg on 24-25 April 2008,
 - having regard to the statement by the chair of the EP delegation to the EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Council following the EU-Russia working group's visit to Moscow on 17-18 March 2008,
 - having regard to Rule 103(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas relations between the EU and Russia have been steadily developing over the past decade, leading to deep and comprehensive economic integration and interdependence, which is bound to increase even more in the near future,

¹ OJ L 327, 28.11.1997, p. 1.

² Texts adopted, P6_TA(2007)0528.

- B. whereas the EU and Russia, which is a member of the UN Security Council, share a responsibility for global stability and security and whereas enhanced cooperation and good-neighbourly relations between the EU and Russia are of particular importance to the stability, security and prosperity of Europe,
- C. whereas the conclusion of a Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) between the EU and the Russian Federation remains of the utmost importance for the further development and intensification of cooperation between the two partners,
- D. whereas the negotiations on such a new SPA should be started as soon as possible on the basis of the progress already achieved on the road to the establishment of the four common spaces, with a common economic space, a space of freedom, security and justice, a space of external security and a space of research, education and culture; whereas the rapid implementation of these four common spaces should be at the heart of the negotiations on the new SPA,
- E. whereas after considerable progress as regards the Russian embargo on imports of meat and other agricultural products from Poland and assurances as regards the closure of the Druzhba pipeline, regarded by Lithuania as a political retaliatory measure, an agreement was eventually reached between the Member States on the finalisation of a new negotiating mandate for a new agreement replacing the present PCA, which expired at the end of last year,
- F. whereas on 7 May 2008 Dmitry Medvedev was formally sworn in as President of the Russian Federation; whereas the new President appointed as Prime Minister former President Vladimir Putin, who was overwhelmingly confirmed in that post by the Duma,
- G. whereas the changes in the Russian leadership following last year's Duma elections and the Presidential elections earlier this year may impart new impetus to EU-Russia relations, to improvements in Russia's relations with some of its close neighbours and to the development of democracy and the rule of law in Russia,
- H. whereas the new Russian President, Dmitry Medvedev, confirmed in his inauguration speech his commitment to the establishment of a mature and effective legal system as an essential condition for economic and social development in Russia as well as for increasing Russia's influence in the international community and for making Russia more open to the world and facilitating dialogue as equals with other peoples; whereas President Medvedev has as a first step decreed the creation of an Anti-Corruption Council, which he himself will chair,
- I. whereas the accession of the Russian Federation to the World Trade Organization (WTO) would make a substantial contribution to the further improvement of economic relations between Russia and the EU, subject to a binding commitment to full compliance with and implementation of WTO commitments and obligations,
- J. whereas security of energy supply is one of the biggest challenges for Europe and one of the major fields of cooperation with Russia; whereas joint efforts must be made to make full and efficient use of energy transmission systems, both those already existing and those to be further developed; whereas the EU's heavy dependence on fossil fuels undermines the development of a balanced, coherent and value-driven European approach to Russia,

- K. whereas Russia has recently included some of the EU's largest energy companies in a strategic partnership in several major energy projects or has allowed EU companies to buy certain limited strategic stakes in Russian companies; whereas the upholding of legal certainty and property rights is essential in order to maintain the current level of foreign investment in Russia,
- L. whereas disputes about the conditions of supply and transmission of energy should be resolved in a negotiated, non-discriminatory and transparent way and must never be used as an instrument to bring political pressure to bear on the EU Member States and on the countries in the common neighbourhood,
- M. whereas a future agreement between the EU and the Russian Federation should therefore include the principles of the Energy Charter Treaty,
- N. whereas the EU and the Russian Federation could and should together play an active role in establishing peace and stability on the European continent, in particular in the common neighbourhood, and in other parts of the world,
- O. whereas the EU and the Russian Federation should in particular work together to definitively resolve the issue of the international status of Kosovo and to achieve a peaceful settlement of the persistently dangerous conflicts in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Nagorno Karabakh and Transnistria,
- P. whereas after the decision by the Russian authorities to establish legal links with the breakaway republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia the situation in those Georgian regions is further deteriorating, calling into question the role of the Russian forces as neutral peace-keepers and undermining the territorial integrity of Georgia,
- Q. whereas Russia has suspended its participation in the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty), stating that it will halt inspections and verifications of its military sites by NATO countries and will no longer limit the number of its conventional weapons,
- R. whereas after his meeting with the EU ministerial troika on Tuesday, 29 April 2008 in Luxembourg, the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, confirmed Russia's participation in the EU military operation in Chad and in Central African Republic (Operation EUFOR Tchad/RCA, launched on 28 January 2008¹),
- S. whereas there remains serious concern about developments in the Russian Federation with regard to respect for, and the protection of, human rights and respect for commonly agreed democratic principles, rules and procedures; whereas the Russian Federation is a full member of the Council of Europe and of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and has therefore committed itself to the principles of democracy and respect for basic human rights,
- T. whereas it is important that the EU speak with one voice, show solidarity and display unity in its relations with the Russian Federation, and base those relations on mutual interests and common values,

¹ Council Joint Action 2007/677/CFSP of 15 October 2007 (OJ L 279, 23.10.2007, p. 21) and Council Decision 2008/101/CFSP of 28 January 2008 (OJ L 34, 8.2.2008, p. 39).

1. Underlines that the forthcoming Summit will be the first EU-Russia Summit attended by Russia's newly elected President Dmitry Medvedev, and expresses its hopes that this meeting will mark an improvement in relations between the EU and Russia;
2. Reaffirms its conviction that Russia remains an important partner for the purpose of building strategic cooperation, and that the EU shares with Russia not only economic and trade interests but also the objective of cooperating closely in the international arena as well as in the common neighbourhood;
3. Stresses the importance of unity among the EU Member States in their relations with Russia and calls on the Member States to give priority to the long-term benefits of a joint position in negotiations with the Russian Federation over the possible short-term advantages of bilateral deals on single issues;
4. Expresses its support for the idea of developing future relations with Russia in a more engaged way, with a continuing focus on areas covered by the four common spaces and on the need for a new PCA, and by focusing on practical cooperation, joint projects and implementation of commitments and agreements made so far;
5. Expresses its satisfaction that it has finally been possible to overcome the obstacles to reaching an agreement on the mandate for negotiations with the Russian Federation on a new PCA;
6. Urges the Council, the Commission and the Member States – together with the Government of the Russian Federation – to use the 21st EU-Russia Summit in Khanty-Mansiysk as a real new starting-point for the further intensification of EU-Russia relations by making a start on the negotiations on a new PCA and by thus creating the basis for further concrete results in the near future;
7. Welcomes the importance attached to civil rights by Mr Medvedev during his inauguration speech and the reiteration by him in that speech of his public support for championing the rule of law and the importance of human rights; expects that these words will be followed up by deeds and that Russia will undertake the necessary reforms that will pave the way for a fully-fledged democratic system;
8. Expresses its deep concern at the continuing reports from Russian and international human rights organisations about the use of torture and inhumane and degrading acts in prisons, police stations and secret detention centres in Chechnya; furthermore expresses its deep concern over the increasingly frequent attacks on ethnic, racial and religious minorities in Russia;
9. Reiterates its call for the EU-Russia Human Rights Consultation to be stepped up so as to make it more effective and results-oriented, with the participation of Russian ministries other than the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with the full involvement of the European Parliament at all levels; takes the view, in this regard, that the briefings organised by the Commission with civil-society actors prior to the official consultation are an important tool that should be duly reinforced and taken into account by the Russian authorities with a view to transforming them into a fully-fledged legal seminar involving academics, representatives of civil society and officials from both sides;
10. Stresses that a strong and independent civil society is a fundamental and irreplaceable element of a real and mature democracy; is deeply concerned, in this regard, about the deteriorating

situation of human rights defenders and difficulties faced by NGOs active in the promotion of human rights and in environmental protection and ecological issues with regard to their registration and in carrying out their activities; is deeply concerned about the newly amended legislation on extremism, which could have an effect on the free flow of information and could lead the Russian authorities to further restrict the right to free expression of independent journalists and political opponents;

11. Calls on the Russian Federation to show its commitment to common values by ratifying Additional Protocol 14 to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, thereby allowing important reforms to go ahead at the European Court of Human Rights, which is burdened with a backlog of tens of thousands of cases; calls on the Russian authorities to comply with all the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights;
12. Welcomes the fact that the EU-Russia Summit will take place in the administrative centre of the Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous District; calls on the Presidency-in-Office to use the opportunity presented by the Summit, followed by the 5th World Congress of Finno-Ugric Peoples, to discuss the difficulties faced by Finno-Ugric minorities in Russia as regards political representation as well as the protection and development of their cultural and linguistic identities;
13. Reiterates, moreover, the importance of setting up the common economic space (CES) and further developing the objectives agreed upon in the CES Road Map, especially as regards the creation of an open and integrated market between the EU and Russia;
14. Welcomes the progress made since the last EU-Russia Summit in Mafra as regards Russia's accession to the WTO, which will create a level playing-field for the business communities on both sides and greatly help Russian efforts to build a modern, diversified, high-technology economy; calls on Russia to take the necessary steps to remove the remaining obstacles to the accession process, especially in the field of export taxes and duties, and to be able to comply in full with and implement WTO membership commitments and obligations, following which the EU should start to discuss the conclusion of a free trade agreement with the Russian Federation;
15. Insists, furthermore, that an agreement be reached soon on the level of duties payable on exports of raw timber from the Russian Federation to the EU; regrets that Russia did not honour its commitment to phase out Siberian overflight payments, and calls on Russia to sign the agreement reached on this issue at the summit in Samara;
16. Stresses the importance of improving the climate for European investment in Russia, which can only be achieved by promoting and facilitating non-discriminatory and transparent business conditions, less bureaucracy and two-way investment; is concerned about the lack of predictability in the application of rules by authorities;
17. Welcomes the intensified EU-Russia dialogue on energy issues and on environmental protection; underlines the importance of energy imports for European economies, representing as they do a potential opportunity for further trade and economic cooperation between the EU and Russia; stresses that such cooperation should be based on the principles of interdependence and transparency, together with equal access to markets, infrastructure and investment; welcomes Russia's accession to the Kyoto Protocol and stresses the need for full support from Russia for binding post-Kyoto climate change targets; calls on the Council and the Commission to ensure that the principles of the Energy Charter Treaty, the

Transit Protocol annexed thereto and the G8 conclusions are included in a new PCA between the EU and Russia, including further cooperation on energy efficiency, carbon emission reductions and renewable energy, and also including the use of bio-energy; points out that these principles should be applied to major energy infrastructure projects; calls for the EU to speak to Russia with one voice on these sensitive energy matters; calls upon the partners in the EU-Russia energy dialogue to examine the possibility of using the euro as a future basis for paying for energy supplies in order to become more independent from third countries' currencies;

18. Expresses its concerns regarding the security of the nuclear sector in the Russian Federation, its plans to export nuclear technology and material to other countries and the associated nuclear security and proliferation threats that they present;
19. Calls on the Russian Federation to support the development of its renewable energy industry in an environmentally friendly and sustainable way; calls on the Russian Federation to guarantee state-of-the-art environmental standards for all the oil and gas projects which are in progress or planned on its territory;
20. Welcomes the progress which the EU and Russia have made in implementing their common space of freedom, security and justice, which so far has focused primarily on implementation of the visa facilitation and readmission agreements, the latter having proved to be a significant step towards visa-free travel as a long-term prospect; calls for further cooperation on illegal immigration, improved checks on identity documents and better information exchange on terrorism and organised crime; emphasises that the Council and the Commission must ensure that Russia complies with all the conditions set in any negotiated agreement on the elimination of visas between the two sides, so as to prevent any breach of security in Europe;
21. Points out that Russia, which last year changed its visa rules and ceased issuing one-year multiple-entry business visas that many European workers had previously used, could face an exodus of EU managers and workers unless it changes the new rules and reduces the onerous red tape required to obtain visas and work permits;
22. Welcomes the stepping-up of EU-Russia cooperation in space within the framework of the Tripartite Space Dialogue set up in March 2006 between the Commission, the European Space Agency and Roscosmos (the Russian Federal Space Agency), encompassing space applications (satellite navigation, earth observation and satellite communications), access to space (launchers and future space transportation systems), space science and space technology development; notes that, within the common economic space, cooperation in space has been identified as a priority sector;
23. Calls for participation by the Russian Federation in the process of building European research infrastructures supported within the European Community Framework Programmes; considers that such an incentive would permit efficient utilisation and further development of substantial Russian human and financial resources in the area of research, development and innovation, and would thus be beneficial for both Europe and Russia;
24. Appeals to the Governments of Russia and the United States to intensify the discussions on defence and security issues directly or indirectly involving the EU Member States; urges the governments of both states fully to involve the EU and its Member States in those discussions and to refrain from any steps or decisions which might be seen as a threat to peace and stability on the European continent;

25. Calls on the Russian Government – together with the European Union and the other members of the Contact Group for Kosovo – to make a positive contribution to finding a sustainable political solution for the future of Kosovo and to the further enhancement of the stability of the Western Balkans;
26. Calls on Russia not to oppose the deployment of the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX KOSOVO¹), as well as to fully support the OSCE and confirm its mandate in order to allow for the full implementation of all the guarantees provided for in the Kosovo Constitution and the commitments by the Kosovo authorities as regards the institutional decentralisation and protection of the non-majority communities and of the cultural and architectural heritage;
27. Calls on the Council and the Commission to pursue joint initiatives with the Russian Government aimed at strengthening security and stability in the common neighbourhood, in particular by means of enhanced dialogue on the establishment of democracy in Belarus and by joint efforts to finally resolve the conflicts in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Nagorno Karabakh and Transnistria;
28. Expresses its serious concern over Russia's decision to establish enhanced links with the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and reiterates its full support for the territorial integrity of Georgia; calls on Russia to refrain from any further action which could aggravate the tension and to take measures to improve relations with Georgia; hopes that the recent meeting in St Petersburg between President Medvedev and President Saakashvili will lead to an improvement in Russo-Georgian relations;
29. Calls on the Presidency-in-Office to raise during the EU-Russia Summit the issue of the shooting-down of a Georgian drone by a Russian aircraft, as well as the recent substantial increase in the number of Russian troops in Abkhazia, and to offer greater EU involvement in the conflict resolution process;
30. Calls on the EU and on Russia, as a member of the UN Security Council and the Quartet, to continue their efforts to achieve progress in the Middle East; also stresses the need for further cooperation with Russia to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and calls on both sides to assume their responsibility in particular for the North Korean and Iranian nuclear issues;
31. Calls on Russia to reconsider its unilateral suspension of compliance with the CFE Treaty and to use negotiations as a means of protecting its legitimate interests and avoiding any erosion of the CFE Treaty; calls on the NATO members to ratify the version of the CFE Treaty as amended in 1999;
32. Welcomes Russia's decision to assist the EU in carrying out its peace-keeping operation in Chad and the Central African Republic, and supports the statement by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and the EU High Representative Javier Solana stipulating that cooperation between Russia and the EU on crisis management would not be limited to Russia's participation in the above-mentioned EUFOR Tchad/RCA operation and that both parties are ready to sign a framework agreement on this subject based on 'equitable partnership and cooperation';

¹ Council Joint Action 2008/124/CFSP of 4 February 2008 (OJ L 42, 16.2.2008, p. 92).

33. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Governments and Parliaments of the Member States and of the Russian Federation, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.