EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

es cs da de et el en fr it lv lt hu mt nl pl pt sk sl fi sv

Index Previous Next Full text

Texts adopted by Parliament

42k

Wednesday 16 November 2005 - Strasbourg

Final edition

Northern dimension P6_TA(2005)0430 **B6-0584**, **0586**, **0587**, **0588**, **0589** and **0590/2005**

European Parliament resolution on the future of the Northern Dimension

The European Parliament ,

– having regard to the Second Northern Dimension Action Plan 2004-2006 as endorsed by the European Council held in Brussels on 16 and 17 October 2003,

– having regard to the Commission Communication of 11 March 2003 to the Council and the European Parliament on Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours (**COM(2003)0104**),

– having regard to the role of the Northern Dimension in implementing the EU-Russia road maps for the creation of the four Common Spaces (the Common Economic Space, the Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice, the Common Space of External Security and the Common Space of Research, Education and Culture), which were adopted at the 15th EU-Russia summit in Moscow on 10 May 2005,

– having regard to its previous resolutions on the Northern Dimension, in particular those of 16 January 2003[(1)] and 20 November 2003[(2)] on the Second Action Plan for the Northern Dimension,

– having regard to the Commission's Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Northern Dimension Action Plan of 20 May 2005 and to the debate in the European Parliament on 8 September 2005,

– having regard to Rule 103(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the Presidency-in-Office has called for a ministerial meeting on the Northern Dimension to be held in Brussels on 21 November 2005, to draw up a plan for the future of the Northern Dimension after the expiry of the current action plan in 2006,

B. whereas the Commission is currently drawing up its proposals for the future of the Northern Dimension policies, which will have to be adopted in 2006 and come into force in 2007,

C. whereas the European Council has repeatedly emphasised the importance of the Northern Dimension for both the internal policies of the Union and its external relations, and the European Union needs to develop its neighbourhood and partnership policies and their instruments in order to connect the Union's different dimensions in a coherent way,

D. whereas the enlargement of the EU has changed the geopolitical map of Northern Europe and shifted the EU's geographical focus towards the north-east, whereas the Northern Dimension entails both new potential and challenges, especially as regards preventing the emergence of new barriers between the EU and its northern neighbours, and whereas enlargement has brought with it a new emphasis on cooperation around the Baltic Sea, since all the Baltic Sea States other than Russia are members of the European Union, on account of which it will be necessary to draw up a separate Baltic Sea strategy within the

Northern Dimension,

E. whereas the previously stated policy objectives of the European Parliament concerning the Northern Dimension have only been partially attained; whereas, in particular, its calls for greater involvement of parliamentarians and other elected representatives are still to be met by the establishment of the Northern Dimension Forum, and Northern Dimension policies continue to have a low profile and suffer from a lack of coordination between the various actors; whereas it supports the activity of its Baltic Intergroup in creating guidelines for further integration in the Baltic Sea Region and the initiative to create a European Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, particularly as an internal pillar of the Northern Dimension,

F. whereas the principal objectives of the future Northern Dimension policy are to provide a common framework for the promotion of dialogue and cooperation, aimed at promoting stability, well-being and sustainable development in Northern Europe and the Arctic, to stimulate trade, investment and infrastructure, to exploit energy resources, to ease the flow of people and goods across borders while working closely together to combat organised crime, and to promote productive employment as well as social and cultural exchange,

G. whereas, since its creation in 1999, the Northern Dimension has proved efficient and of political, economic and social value and the Northern Dimension covers one of the most challenging regions of Europe, with a huge potential for future cooperation with Russia, Iceland and Norway;

H. underlining in particular the value and impact of the Northern Dimension's environmental policy throughout the region, as exemplified by the St Petersburg water treatment facility, but stressing the further need to enhance cooperation between Member States and in particular to reduce eutrophication and between the EU and Russia in particular to reduce the risk of oil tanker accidents and the risks associated with oil field exploitation and to improve nuclear safety and nuclear waste management; whereas the Baltic Sea is already heavily polluted and its position as an inland sea puts it at particular risk,

1. Stresses that the Northern Dimension must be given a higher profile in order to attain its objectives, that improved coordination between the various actors involved remains a key challenge and that the Northern Dimension should receive the same attention as other regional cooperation models; calls on the Commission and the current and incoming Presidencies-in-Office to guarantee the successful continuation of the ongoing negotiations on the future of the Northern Dimension and to fully involve the European Parliament in that work;

2. Calls on the Commission to create a comprehensive approach in the external Northern Dimension policies of the Union, both bilateral and multilateral, including the Baltic Sea and Barents region as well as the Arctic as a whole; stresses the special status of Russia as a key partner while underlining the important role of the other northern neighbours, Iceland and Norway, as well as the other Arctic partners, Canada and the United States; stresses the importance of fully involving the northern neighbours in the new Neighbourhood Policy and taking them into account in the regulation on a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument;

3. Stresses that the successful accession of 10 new countries, including those involved in the Northern Dimension, has taken the Northern Dimension into a new phase; calls on the Commission to allocate adequate resources to the Northern Dimension policy in order to allow new future partnerships to be envisaged, inter alia in the fields of transport, logistics, energy and culture; considers that the partnership in social and health affairs should be more adequately supported; consequently, calls on the Commission, as part of its current work on the future of the Northern Dimension, to seriously consider whether a separate budget line for the Northern Dimension would help to raise its profile, while being in line with the Northern Dimension's character as a framework policy for the northern region; notes that such a proposal must take account, and increase the transparency, of the various sources of financing, including co-financing from third parties; underlines the need to take into account the special needs of the northern regions in the work of all Directorates-General and in all parts of the EU budget;

4. Reminds the Commission, the Council and the Member States of its earlier calls for a greater role for elected representatives and parliamentarians within the Northern Dimension to promote and coordinate the integration of different forums for regional cooperation in northern Europe; expects concrete proposals from the Commission in that respect and reiterates its support for the establishment of the Northern Dimension Forum and its readiness to play a full part in it and to host its first meeting; underlines the need to secure full participation by the indigenous peoples of the region;

5. Calls on the Commission to include a Baltic Sea Strategy in its forthcoming Northern Dimension

proposal, in order to strengthen cooperation around the Baltic Sea, reap the full benefits of the recent enlargement of the Union and firmly link the infrastructure with the rest of the European Union; anticipates that this strategy would primarily deal with internal policies of the European Union, while cooperation with Russia would fall under the external policies of the EU; welcomes the fact that the agreement with Moscow on the roadmaps covering each of the Four Common Spaces provides for an updated framework for the relationship between the EU and Russia; underlines that the Northern Dimension will reflect the regional aspect of those spaces; emphasises the fact that this process needs to be carried out in real cooperation with Russia;

6. Calls for improved coordination between the EU, the Arctic Council, the Council of the Baltic Sea States, the Nordic Council, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and other bodies involved in cooperation in the northern regions; notes that the Commission should be more active in participating in their meetings;

7. Supports the Council and Commission in their efforts to involve Russia in the Northern Dimension policies, but stresses that the EU strategy on Russia should be implemented in full solidarity among all Member States, while pointing out the need to fully engage with other neighbours in the north, notably Norway and Iceland, in particular in the areas of maritime development and energy; welcomes in this context the White Paper on the High North published by the Norwegian Government;

8. Recalls that big infrastructure projects in the field of energy and transportation in the Baltic region should take into account legitimate safety concerns of the Member States as well as their environmental impact;

9. Reminds the Commission of the forthcoming International Polar Year 2007-2008, and calls on the Commission to use that opportunity to take new initiatives together with the Arctic partners, including Canada and the United States, in particular as regards the work on a 'Charter for Arctic Governance';

10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments of the Member States, Norway, Iceland, Russia, Canada and the United States and the regional cooperation partners.

---

(1) OJ C 38 E, 12.2.2004, p. 310.

(2) OJ C 87 E, 7.4.2004, p. 515.

Last updated: 12 May 2006 **Legal notice**