Resolution on the EU-Russia Summit of 26-27 June 2008 in Khanty-Mansiysk

2008/2542(RSP) - 19/06/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

Following the debate which took place during the sitting of 18 June 2008, the European Parliament adopted, by 488 votes to 34 against with 30 abstentions, a resolution on the EU-Russia Summit to be held on 26-27 June 2008 in Khanty-Mansiysk. The resolution had been tabled for consideration in plenary by the EPP-ED, PES, ALDE, UEN, and Greens/EFA groups. It 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. Parliament 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.

Members express their 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, and they urge all parties 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.

Parliament welcomes the importance attached to civil rights by Mr Medvedev during his inauguration speech, as well as his public support for the rule of law and the importance of human rights. It expresses deep concern, however, at the continuing reports about the use of torture and inhumane and degrading acts in prisons, police stations and secret detention centres in Chechnya. It also expresses deep concern over the increasingly frequent attacks on ethnic, racial and religious minorities in Russia, and reiterates its call for the EU-Russia Human Rights Consultation to be stepped up so as to make it more effective and results-oriented. Parliament is deeply concerned about the deteriorating situation of human rights defenders and difficulties faced by NGOs active in the promotion of human rights. It is, moreover, 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. The Russian Federation is asked to ratify Additional Protocol 14 to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and to comply with all the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights.

Parliament welcomes the progress made as regards Russia's accession to the WTO, and calls on Russia to remove the remaining obstacles to the accession process, especially in the field of export taxes and duties. It insists that an agreement be reached soon on the level of duties payable on exports of raw timber from the Russian Federation to the EU. Parliament regrets that Russia did not honour its commitment to phase out Siberian overflight payments. In general, it stresses the importance of improving the climate for European investment in Russia and expresses concern about the lack of predictability in the application of rules by authorities.

Members welcome the intensified EU-Russia dialogue on energy issues and on environmental protection, and also welcome Russia's accession to the Kyoto Protocol. They call for the inclusion of the principles of the Energy Charter Treaty, the Transit Protocol and the G8 conclusions 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. The EU must speak to Russia with one voice on these sensitive energy matters. Parliament 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.

Parliament appeals to the Governments of Russia and the United States to intensify the discussions on defence and security issues involving the EU Member States. It 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.

Russia is asked not to oppose the deployment of the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX KOSOVO). It should fully support the OSCE and confirm its mandate. Parliament goes on to call for joint initiatives with the Russian Government aimed at strengthening stability in the common neighbourhood, in particular by means of enhanced dialogue on the establishment of democracy in Belarus and by joint efforts to resolve the conflicts in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Nagorno Karabakh and Transnistria. It expresses 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. Russia must refrain from any further action which could aggravate tension and should improve relations with Georgia. The Presidency-in-Office is asked to raise during the 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.

Lastly, Parliament calls on the EU and on Russia, the latter a member of the UN Security Council and the Quartet, to continue their efforts to achieve progress in the Middle East and to assume their responsibility for the North Korean and Iranian nuclear issues.