Resolution on the situation in Ukraine

2010/2525(RSP) - 25/02/2010 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate on 10 February 2010, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the situation in Ukraine.

The resolution had been tabled by the ALDE, S&D, EPP, Greens/ALE and ECR groups. It welcomes the fact that the report of the International Election Observation Mission states, on the **presidential elections in Ukraine** that took place on 17 January and 7 February 2010 that significant progress has been made compared to previous elections. This election has met most OSCE and EU standards on free and fair elections. Members also welcome the relatively high voter turnout, and the fact that this election saw a diverse field of candidates representing alternative political views, offering the electorate a genuine choice. However, they regret that election rules remain an ongoing subject of discussion and point out that the existing election law, as amended in August 2009, is regarded by OSCE/ODHIR as a backward step compared to previous legislation, resulting in an unclear and incomplete legal framework. Parliament also criticises the adoption by the Verkhovna Rada of the highly controversial amendments to the presidential electoral law proposed by the Party of Regions just a few days before the second round. Therefore the Ukrainian authorities are encouraged to review the country's electoral legislation, with more transparency in the financing of candidates and political parties and more transparent campaign financing during pre-election periods.

Members note that, since the Orange Revolution, Ukraine has regrettably lost more than five years in properly addressing its major constitutional and institutional deficits, especially in solving the conflicts of competence between the President and Prime Minister. As a consequence, important reform projects in the public, economic and social sectors have been delayed, inconsistently implemented or not completed at all. They stress the need to make greater efforts to reach out to minority communities in Ukraine by further integrating these communities in the political developments of the country and promoting adequately the right to education in minority languages. Parliament recognises **Ukraine's European aspirations**, and expects Ukrainian politicians and authorities to work for political and economic stabilisation, notably through constitutional reform, consolidation of the rule of law, the establishment of a social market economy and renewed efforts to combat corruption, and improve the business and investment climate. Members expect Ukraine to reiterate its determination to continue along its path towards European integration, as well as towards strong cooperation with the EU in the neighbourhood area under the Eastern Partnership and Black Sea Synergy policies. They call on the Commission and the Council to reaffirm the EU's willingness to help Ukraine in this direction through the instruments proposed by the Eastern Partnership and the EU-Ukraine Association Agenda. The Commission is asked to align closely the National Indicative Programme 2011-13 with the Association Agenda. Parliament stresses that the Deep and Comprehensive Free-Trade Agreement should ensure Ukraine's gradual integration into the EU internal market including the extension of the four freedoms to the country.

On the **issue of energy**, Parliament stresses the importance of reinforcing cooperation between Ukraine and the EU in the field of energy and calls for further agreements between the EU and Ukraine aimed at securing energy supplies for both sides, including a reliable transit system for oil and gas. It wants Ukraine to implement fully and ratify its accession to the Energy Community Treaty and swiftly to adopt a new gas law which complies with EU Directive 2003/55/EC. Members call on the Commission to provide the necessary technical assistance in order to improve radically the energy efficiency of Ukraine's electricity grid and to step up cooperation as regards reform of the gas sector, in order to bring it into line with EU standards. They ask for consistent European support for a Ukrainian strategy to reduce energy consumption and to increase energy efficiency, as the best way to reduce spending on gas and its dependency on energy imports.

On visas, the resolution underlines the fact that, although progress has been made, the **existing visa facilitation agreement should be re-examined** with long-term objectives in mind. It calls on the Council to mandate the Commission to revise this agreement with the Ukrainian authorities in order to work on a roadmap to visa-free travel for Ukraine, including the intermediate objective of abolishing the existing visa fees. The Commission is asked to work with the Member States and Ukraine to prepare special measures to be introduced in relation to the European Football Championship, with a view to facilitating travel by ticket holders.

On **regional issues,** Parliament welcomes Ukraine's active support for the Eastern Partnership and the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly and its commitment to consolidating its efforts to ensure greater democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as to the social market economy, sustainable development and good governance. It supports Eastern Partnership flagship initiatives, most notably on integrated border management, energy, a Free-Trade Area and comprehensive institution building. The resolution appeals to all neighbouring countries to fully respect the democratic system of the Ukrainian state and to refrain from any pressure or interference aimed at overturning the democratic will and decisions taken by Ukraine in relation to its political, social and economic development.

Lastly, Parliament deeply deplores the decision by the outgoing President of Ukraine, Viktor Yushchenko, posthumously to award Stepan Bandera, a leader of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) which collaborated with Nazi Germany, the title of 'National Hero of Ukraine'. It hopes, in this regard, that the new Ukrainian leadership will reconsider such decisions and will maintain its commitment to European values.