Resolution on Ukraine

2010/2934(RSP) - 25/11/2010 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate which took place during the sitting of 24 November 2010 the European Parliament adopted a resolution on Ukraine.

The resolution had been tabled by the Greens/ALE, S&D, EFD, GUE/NGL, EPP, ALDE and ECR groups.

It emphasise that Ukraine may apply for membership of the EU like any European state that adheres to the principles of freedom, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. Members stress that Ukraine has a European perspective and strong historical, cultural and economic links to the EU and that it is one of the Union's key partners in its Eastern neighbourhood. They call on the Ukrainian authorities to establish a common forum to coordinate Ukraine's political position vis-à-vis the EU, that forum to consist of politicians from both the ruling coalition and the opposition.

With regard to the **31 October 2010 local and regional elections**, Parliament considers that, although conducted technically in an orderly manner, the elections did not set a new, positive standard. It regrets the fact that Ukraine changed its electoral law a few months before holding local and regional elections, leaving too little time to improve the law and prepare to conduct elections in a sound, democratic manner. It regrets the fact that because registration requests from the opposition parties were not accepted by electoral commissions before the submission of the Party of Regions' list, the ruling party in effect gained first place on the lists in approximately 85% of the constituencies.

Parliament is also concerned about recent developments that could undermine **media freedom and pluralism**, and calls on the authorities to take all necessary measures to protect these essential aspects of a democratic society and to refrain from any attempt to control, directly or indirectly, the content of reporting in the national media. It notes that there are increasingly worrying signs of a lessening of respect for democracy and pluralism, as evidenced, in particular, by the treatment of some NGOs and individual complaints by journalists about pressure from their editors or the owners of their media outlets to cover or not cover certain events, as well as increased and politically motivated activity by the Ukrainian Security Service (SBU) and the misuse of administrative and judicial resources for political purposes.

Members call on the Ukrainian authorities thoroughly to investigate the disappearance of Vasyl Klymentyev, the editor-in-chief of a newspaper that focuses on corruption in the Kharkiv region. They also call on the authorities fully to **investigate all reports of infringements of rights and freedoms**, to remedy any violations identified and to investigate the role of the SBU with regard to interference in the democratic process.

The resolution goes on to highlight Ukraine's pivotal role in the EU's energy security. It emphasises the importance of stepping up cooperation between Ukraine and the EU in the field of energy, and calls on Ukraine to implement its commitments arising out of the Joint Declaration of the EU-Ukraine International Investment Conference on the Modernisation of Ukraine's Gas Transit System. It also calls for further agreements to be concluded between the EU and Ukraine aimed at securing energy supplies for both sides, including a reliable and diversified transit system for oil and gas. If Ukraine is to have a modern gas transit system, it requires transparent and high-quality transit services through a modernised gas transportation network. 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.

Parliament states that it is encouraged by the progress in the negotiations on the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, in particular its deep and comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) aspects, and it stresses that the DCFTA should make for Ukraine's gradual integration into the EU internal market, including the extension of the four freedoms to the country.

Members welcome the Action Plan towards **visa liberalisation for Ukraine** as agreed at the 14th EU-Ukraine Summit on 22 November 2010, and they calls on the Commission to assist the Ukrainian authorities in their efforts to advance towards visa liberalisation. Member States are urged to abolish fees for processing national and Schengen visa applications for Ukrainian citizens as an intermediate objective. Parliament asks the Commission to work with the Member States and Ukraine to prepare special measures to be taken in relation to the 2012 European Football Championship, with a view to facilitating travel by ticket-holders, and to use this special occasion as a testing period for a final visa-free regime.

Lastly, Parliament welcomes Ukraine's active support for the Eastern Partnership and the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly, and urges the Council and Commission to further step up cooperation with Ukraine in the context of developments in the neighbourhood area, in particular the development of policies for the Black Sea region