Common strategy with the Russia Federation

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The Committee adopted the report by its chairman Tom SPENCER (EPP, UK) on the principle of a common strategy towards the Russian Federation. Such strategies are a product of the Amsterdam Treaty in areas where the member states have "important interests in common" and they seek to establish the political framework for the partnership to be developed between the two parties. The proposed common strategy with Russia would be the first, and its adoption is planned for the European Council summit in Cologne this June. The report expresses the hope for stronger cooperation between the EU and Moscow which will promote the rule of law and a democratic system in Russia. In the economic field the report calls on the EU to help the modernisation and development of the Russian economy and to seek to ensure that Russia's need to service its debt will not impede economic reform. The EU should endeavour to involve Russia in political initiatives of common interest in order to consolidate peace and security and should also strengthen cooperation in the fields of nuclear safety and environmental protection. A series of amendments were passed which, among other issues, call for strengthened cooperation against crime and state that all implementing decisions should be taken by qualified majority voting in Council. In a further amendment the Committee expressed the view that the quality of the common strategy with Russia is more important than its early adoption, and it therefore voted narrowly to advise the European Council to delay its adoption and to reconsider it at the next European Summit. In the meantime Parliament should be properly consulted on the contents of the common strategy.