The European Union and Russia: the future relationship

1995/2119(COS) - 02/04/1998 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Adopting the report by Mrs Catherine LALUMIERE (ARE, F) on relations between the EU and Russia, Parliament points out that Russia has an integral place in the history and culture of Europe. The EU's strategy towards Russia should therefore be one of its priorities for future action, concentrating on consolidating Russian society, developing partnership, strengthening security on the basis of balanced cooperation and opening up European markets to Russian products. 1) Consolidating Russian society: the EU should give its full support to the process of political and economic reform in Russia so as to reduce the negative phenomena (corruption, mafia practices, etc.) which have accompanied the transition. Exchanges must be encouraged between people in leading roles in politics, administration, economic life and social affairs and assistance given to developing civil society. Cooperation must be developed with the Russian authorities on matters falling within the scope of the third pillar (justice and internal affairs: all kinds of trafficking, trafficking in human beings, money laundering, etc.) in order to fight crime more effectively. Russia is also called upon to ratify the additional Protocol 6 to the European Convention on Human Rights concerning abolition of the death penalty and to make official the moratorium on capital punishment which entered into force in August 1996. Parliament also calls on Russia to bring federal Russian laws into line with recognized international standards with regard to human rights and the rights of indigenous peoples. With regard to the TACIS programme in the next few years, the EU should accord an important place to: - carrying out projects in the area of education, safety and housing; - setting up and implementing a legal framework within which the rule of law can operate and which accords people and businesses greater legal certainty; - implementing a just and effective tax system; - strengthening media diversity. 2) Developing a partnership: Parliament calls for Euro-Russian projects to be developed in the industrial field, starting with the high technology sector (biology, computers, space, aeronautics, energy and telecommunications) so as to make Russia a fully-fledged partner in these frontier technology sectors. It calls on the Commission to coordinate its activities with the Russian Government to prevent illegal trafficking in fissile material and to improve the safety of Russian nuclear installations and possibly to close the particularly dangerous reactors. It calls on the Commission to intensify its efforts under the TACIS programme to diversify energy sources in the Russian Federation with the emphasis on promoting renewable energies and combating energy waste. It also calls for the Russian Parliament to ratify the European Energy Charter Treaty. It supports Russia's bid to join the WTO. It calls on the Member States to recognize Russia's cultural heritage through cultural cooperation programmes and joint cultural events and twinning arrangements between towns and regions. 3) Strengthening security: Parliament considers that the security of European peoples forms an indivisible whole and that this security depends to a very large extent on relations between the EU and Russia. At the outset, all the possibilities provided by the founding act on mutual relations between NATO and the Russian Federation must be used to help create a more stable, peaceful and undivided Europe, whereby the inviolability of existing borders, human rights and the rights of minorities are respected. The EU, WEU, NATO and the Russian Federation must then continue to develop close links between their parliamentary bodies, political leaders and military high commands and continue to cooperate in peace-keeping operations. Parliament hopes that the EU itself will develop security relations with Russia. It considers that, over and above security issues, there is a need to map out a new order for cooperation on a continental European scale following the events since 1989 and in connection with the EU's forthcoming enlargement to include the CEECs. This new structure must ensure that relations between the main political and economic actors on the international stage are as balanced as possible. Parliament stresses that reinforced partnership with Russia requires a concomitant reinforcement of the EU's common foreign and security policy. It calls for resolute cooperation with Russia in the context of the Council of Baltic Sea States and the Euro-Arctic, Barents Sea and Arctic Councils.