Resolution on the 12th EU-Russia summit held on 6 November 2003 in Rome

2003/2579(RSP) - 20/11/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the EU-Russia summit held on 6 November 2003. Whilst welcoming many decisions made at the summit, including the establishment of a common space of external security as well as the high degree of mutual understanding in regard to a number of acute international issues, Parliament expressed its deep concern about continuing reports of grave human rights abuses in Chechnya. It urged the Russian authorities to allow unfettered international human rights monitoring in the republic, to immediately halt attempts by the Russian, authorities to forcibly return Chechen internally displaced persons and refugees until they can return voluntarily in safety and dignity to their place of origin or choice, to ensure immediate action to bring to justice those responsible for grave abuses committed during the conflict in Chechnya, and to provide concrete information about all criminal investigations into alleged crimes which may amount to human rights violations or violations of international humanitarian law. On this point Parliament also: - calls also on the Council and the Commission to express their concern on the case of kidnapped Dutch 'Mdecins sans frontires' aid worker Arjan Erkel; - welcomed the decision of a British court to refuse the extradition of the Chechen leader Akhmed Zakhaiev requested by the Russian authorities; - supports the statement made by its President on the inadequate handling of the Chechnya and Kyoto issues in the Summit's joint statement. Parliament deplored the declarations made by the President-in-Office of Council, Silvio Berlusconi, in which he expressed his support for the Russian Government's position concerning the human rights situation in Chechnya and the state of democracy in the Russian Federation. The issue of Chechnya as a separate item must be high on the agenda of EU-Russia relations. There must be an immediate political solution to the conflict, which cannot be considered solely as part of the fight against terrorism. The EU's is willing to act as a mediator. Furthermore, a political solution to the Transdniestria problem is only possible if combined with full withdrawal of Russian troops from Moldova. Russia must honour its international obligations and withdraw its troops in accordance with the timetable laid down at the OSCE meetings in Istanbul and Porto. Finally, Parliament moved to deplore the fact that the Summit involved no discussions on the environment issues where EU and Russia share responsibility, with special reference to the environmental threat to the Baltic Sea. It stressed the importance of Russia's ratification and observance of the Espo Convention on Environmental Assessment in a Transboundary Context in order to develop effective environmental protection measures for the Baltic Sea. It is vital for all oil extraction in the Baltic Sea, irrespective of location, that an environmental impact assessment (EIA) be carried out. Such an EIA should be conducted according to international standards, be accessible for any other country and should also cover the establishment of new large-scale ports or extending the life of nuclear power plants.