Basic information

2002/2164(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
EU/Belarus relations: prospects for a future partnership **Subject** 6.40.04 Relations with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) **Geographical area** Belarus	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security, Defense	MARSET CAMPOS Pedro (GUE/NGL)	11/09/2002

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
General Affairs	2458	2002-10-21

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
10/10/2002	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
21/10/2002	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		Summary
23/01/2003	Vote in committee		Summary
23/01/2003	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0024/2003	
11/02/2003	Decision by Parliament	T5-0042/2003	Summary
11/02/2003	Debate in Parliament		
11/02/2003	End of procedure in Parliament		
19/02/2004	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2002/2164(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative

Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/5/16638

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0024/2003	23/01/2003	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T5-0042/2003 OJ C 043 19.02.2004, p. 0018-0060 E	11/02/2003	Summary

EU/Belarus relations: prospects for a future partnership

2002/2164(INI) - 11/02/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Pedro MARSET CAMPOS (EUL/NGL, Spain) on the deteriorating conditions in Belarus. (Please refer to the document dated 23/01/03.) Parliament condemned the regime's indiscriminate attacks on the media, journalists, members of the opposition, human rights activists and any person criticising the President and the regime. There are arbitrary arrests, ill-treatment of detainees, disappearances, politically motivated persecution and other acts of repression that flout the basic principles of democracy and the rule of law. The Belarus authorities must implement the economic reforms needed for transition from an obsolete centrally planned economy to a market economy. They must also establish a legal framework that is more conducive to foreign investment in view of the increasing impoverishment of large swathes of Belarus society, which are suffering the effects of poor economic management. Parliament urged various bodies to play their parts: - the Commission is asked to develop a specific strategy within its 'Wider Europe' proposal for democratisation and the development of a social market economy in Belarus. This strategy should be based on positive results of the TACIS programme in Belarus. - the EU and its Member States should step up contacts with reform-minded forces in all areas of Belarus society (NGOs, churches, entrepreneurs, trade unions, cultural, university and economic spheres and non-governmental human rights organisations) and with the democratic opposition parties, and provide them with assistance and support; - Russia could exert a moderating influence on the Minsk Government, encouraging it to embrace democratic change, given the strong historical, cultural, economic and political ties between these two countries. This issue should be raised during the regular political dialogue with Russia, so that the most appropriate course of action can be identified. The formation of a union between Russia and an undemocratic Belarus would be contradictory; - the Troika should pursue its joint efforts to bring a favourable influence to bear on moves to restore democracy in Belarus, since at present it is the only body through which communication with the Lukashenko regime is possible; - the Commission is asked to initiate an official investigation into freedom of association in Belarus and, on the basis of this investigation, if necessary, to implement the procedures for temporary withdrawal of GSP trade preferences provided for in Regulation 2820/98/EC; - understanding and knowledge of the EU is important. The Commission is asked to promote the broadcasting of television or radio programmes from neighbouring candidate countries, such as Lithuania and Poland, which could be received throughout Belarus territory.

EU/Belarus relations: prospects for a future partnership

2002/2164(INI) - 21/10/2002

The Council adopted the following declaration on Belarus and its relations with OSCE: at its meeting on 21 October 2002, the Council of the EU expressed serious concern about the situation of democracy and human rights in Belarus and adopted the following declaration. The EU emphasises the importance for all European States of respect for human rights and freedoms, as guaranteed in the UN Charter and embodied in the Helsinki Final Act. In Belarus, the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group (AMG) in Minsk has a vital role to play in assisting the Government of Belarus and civil society in promoting democratic institutions and in complying with other OSCE commitments as well as monitor and report on this process. The EU has consistently supported the Portuguese Chair of OSCE in its efforts to solve the impasse regarding the AMG in Minsk. It believes that the Chair has already shown great flexibility in trying to find a solution to the problems that have arisen as a result of Belarus' treatment of the AMG. The EU cannot accept the Belarusian position that the AMG should be formally closed before negotiations on a new OSCE presence can begin. It supports the Chair's view that the AMG's 1997-mandate remains in force, in full, until there is consensus in the OSCE Permanent Council to amend or replace it. Furthermore, the EU has noted the commitment made in September by M. Khvostov to enter into negotiations with a view to the continued operation of the AMG. The EU urges the Belarusian authorities to enter into immediate, meaningful and result-oriented negotiations. In addition, the EU requests the Government of Belarus immediately to extend the accreditation of the remaining member of the diplomatic staff of the Mission beyond 29 October 2002, or alternatively to extend accreditation to a replacement, with a view to avoiding disruption to the activities of the Mission. If the Government of Belarus fails to indicate its agreement to this request by 29 October, this will seriously effect not only relations with the OSCE, but also the development of relations between Belarus and the EU. The EU remains deeply concerned at the lack of progress in democratic reform and the growing deterioration of individual freedoms and rights of expression in Belarus; should, in addition, the AMG be unable to continue its work, the EU will be

obliged to review its relations with Belarus and envisage further specific measures. If, on the other hand, an adequate solution allowing for the effective and lasting operation of the AMG was found, the EU could take this as a new starting point for discussions on the improvement of its relations with Belarus. The EU expresses readiness to continue to work closely with the Chair to ensure that the OSCE can contribute to the development of genuine democracy and full respect for human rights in Belarus, including through an active OSCE presence. Lastly, the Council of the EU will consider the evolution of the situation in Belarus at its meeting on 18/19 November 2002.