Basic information

2009/2567(RSP) RSP - Resolutions on topical subjects	Procedure completed
Resolution on bi-annual evaluation of the EU-Belarus dialogue **Subject** 6.40.04 Relations with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) **Geographical area** Belarus	

Key players

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
General Affairs	2933	2009-03-16

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
16/03/2009	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		Summary
25/03/2009	Debate in Parliament		Summary
02/04/2009	Decision by Parliament	T6-0212/2009	Summary
02/04/2009	Results of vote in Parliament		
02/04/2009	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2009/2567(RSP)
Procedure type	RSP - Resolutions on topical subjects
Procedure subtype	Resolution on statement
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 136-p2
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Motion for a resolution		B6-0177/2009	02/04/2009	

Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0212/2009	02/04/2009	Summary

Resolution on bi-annual evaluation of the EU-Belarus dialogue

2009/2567(RSP) - 16/03/2009

The Council evaluated the developments in Belarus and decided on the direction of EU policy, in particular on the further suspension of the **visa-ban** sanctions and the extension of restrictive measures.

In its conclusions, the Council welcomes that certain positive steps have been taken by Belarus following the Council's decision on the temporary suspension of the travel restrictions imposed on certain officials of Belarus in October 2008. It also welcomes the increased high-level EU-Belarus dialogue, including **bilateral contacts**, and the intensified technical cooperation initiated by the Commission, as a way of building mutual understanding and providing an opportunity to address the parties' concerns and issues of common interest.

Nevertheless, the Council continues to be concerned about the human rights situation in Belarus and the recent cases of violation in this area.

In order to encourage the adoption and implementation of further concrete measures towards democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the Council – while deciding to extend for one year from the date of the Council the restrictive measures provided for by Common Position 2006/276/CFSP, as extended by Common Position 2008/844/CFSP– has decided to maintain the suspension of the application of the travel restrictions imposed on certain officials of Belarus, in accordance with the terms set out in Council Common Position 2008/844/CFSP, for a nine months period. By the end of the nine months period, the Council will conduct an in-depth review of the restrictive measures taking into account the situation in Belarus, and provided that there are further positive developments, it will be ready to consider the possibility of lifting the restrictive measures.

At any time, the Council may decide to re-apply the travel restrictions if necessary, in the light of the actions of the Belarusian authorities in the sphere of democracy and human rights.

Lastly, the European Union remains ready to deepen its relations with Belarus **subject to progress made by Belarus** on the path towards democracy, human rights and rule of law and to assist Belarus in attaining these objectives. It underlines the importance of all the principles and commitments made by Belarus in the framework of the OSCE. The EU will intensify its cooperation with Belarusian civil society in order to support the development of a democratic and pluralist environment.

Resolution on bi-annual evaluation of the EU-Belarus dialogue

2009/2567(RSP) - 02/04/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate which took place during the sitting of 25 March 2009, the European Parliament adopted by 594 votes to 19 with 38 abstentions a resolution on the bi-annual evaluation of the EU-Belarus dialogue The resolution had been tabled by the EPP-ED, PES, ALDE, UEN and Green/ALE groups.

Parliament states that it supports the decision of the Council to extend for one year the restrictive measures against certain Belarusian officials and at the same time to maintain the suspension of the application of travel restrictions imposed on certain officials of Belarus for a nine-month period. It continues to be concerned about the human rights situation in Belarus and the recent cases of violations in this area; looks forward to the launching of a human rights dialogue with Belarus in the near future;

Whilst welcoming the increased high-level EU-Belarus dialogue, Parliament believes that intensification of the political dialogue between the EU and Belarus must be conditional on the lifting of restrictions on freedom and cessation of violence against participants in opposition protests and human rights activists. MEPs call specifically for the immediate release of Mikalai Autukhovich, Yury Liavonau and Uladzimir Asipenka and Artsiom Dubski and for a review of the "restricted freedom" sentences imposed on 11 persons who participated in a demonstration which took place in January 2008.

Parliament calls on the Government of Belarus to use the next 9 months to demonstrate substantial progress in the following areas:

reform of Belarus's electoral legislation to provide guaranteed representation of opposition members on election commissions at all levels;

- providing equal rights to all media outlets by lifting a ban on dissemination of independent print media through state-owned distribution networks;
- guaranteeing freedom of association and assembly by repealing Article 193-1 of the Belarus Criminal Code;
- guaranteeing political rights and freedoms by discontinuing the practice of politically motivated dismissals from jobs and universities;
- stopping persecution for avoiding military service of students expelled from universities for their civic stance, and reviewing the recent cases of the forcible army conscription of several young activists.

Should Belarus fulfil these criteria during the period of 9 months, the Council and Commission must consider lifting the travel ban on a permanent basis, as well as speeding up the process of Belarus's reintegration into the European family of democratic nations.

Parliament also calls on Belarus to do the following:

- immediately establish a moratorium on all death sentences with a view to abolishing the death penalty and commute the sentences of all prisoners currently on death row;
- recognise the Union of Poles in Belarus led by Angelika Borys, who was re-elected as its Chair at the Congress of the Union of Poles on 15 March 2009;

The Council and Commission, as appropriate, are asked to do the following:

- take further steps to liberalise visa procedures for Belarusian citizens, and consider the scope for reducing the cost of visas for Belarusian citizens entering the Schengen Area and simplifying the procedure for obtaining visas;
- make full use of the possibilities to support civil society and democratic developments in Belarus via the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), and fully inform Parliament how the funding from the EIDHR is spent;
- grant financial support to the independent Belarusian television channel Belsat, and to urge the Belarusian Government to officially register Belsat in Belarus;
- consider measures to improve the business climate, trade, investment, energy and transport infrastructure and cross-border cooperation between the EU and Belarus.

Lastly, the Belarusian Government is urged to enable the Belarusian 'European Humanities University' (EHU) in exile in Vilnius (Lithuania) to return legally to Belarus on the basis of genuine guarantees that it will be able to re-establish itself for its future development in Minsk.