Basic information

2009/2790(RSP) RSP - Resolutions on topical subjects	Procedure completed
Resolution on Belarus **Subject** 6.10.04 Third-country political situation, local and regional conflicts **Geographical area** Belarus	

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
16/12/2009	Debate in Parliament		
17/12/2009	Decision by Parliament	T7-0117/2009	Summary
17/12/2009	Results of vote in Parliament		
17/12/2009	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2009/2790(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		B7-0248/2009	16/12/2009	
Motion for a resolution		B7-0250/2009	16/12/2009	
Motion for a resolution		B7-0251/2009	16/12/2009	
Motion for a resolution		B7-0253/2009	16/12/2009	
Motion for a resolution		B7-0254/2009	16/12/2009	
Motion for a resolution		B7-0256/2009	16/12/2009	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0117/2009	17/12/2009	Summary

Resolution on Belarus

2009/2790(RSP) - 17/12/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on Belarus.

The resolution had been tabled by the EPP, S&D, ALDE, ECR and EFD groups.

Parliament supports the Council's decision to extend the restrictive measures against certain Belarusian officials but at the same time to further suspend the application of the travel restrictions until October 2010. Parliament stresses that the increased political dialogue and the establishment of the Human Rights Dialogue between the EU and Belarus must lead to concrete results and substantial progress in the fields of democratic reforms and respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Members welcome the constructive and active participation of Belarus in the Eastern Partnership. They note that new impetus should be given to mutually fruitful dialogue between Belarus and the EU through interparliamentary cooperation within Euronest and that Belarus will be invited to participate fully and on an equal basis in the Euronest Assembly - the parliamentary dimension of the Eastern Partnership - as soon as free and fair elections to the Belarusian Parliament take place. Until then interim provisions should be applied.

Parliament calls on the Commission to draft a proposal on a joint interim plan for Belarus setting priorities for reforms inspired by the action plans developed in the framework of the ENP in order to revitalise the suspended ratification procedure for the EU-Belarus Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) It takes the view that the PCA, which has been frozen since 1997, should be reactivated once all the political reforms have been completed and implemented.

The resolution goes on to insist that clear and significant progress towards democratisation is expected within the next year in order for the sanctions to be completely lifted. It sets out a list of conditions that must be fulfilled for full re-engagement with Belarus. These conditions include ensuring respect for freedom of expression by reforming the Media Law, allowing the registration of all political parties and civil society organisations, safeguarding freedom of religion for religious denominations other than the Orthodox Church, in particular letting New Life Church operate freely, and creating favourable conditions for the operation of NGOs and independent media.

Parliament notes with regret that, after initial positive steps undertaken by the Belarus Government, no further essential progress has been made in the field of human rights and fundamental freedoms. It recalls in this respect the continued repression of political opponents and the refusal to register political parties (Belarusian Christian Democracy), NGOs ('Viasna') and independent media (TV Belsat). Members call on the Commission and the governments of the Member States to grant financial support to TV Belsat and to urge the Belarusian Government officially to register Belsat in Belarus. They ask the Belarusian Government, as a sign of goodwill and positive change, 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 operate freely and re-establish itself under suitable conditions for its future development in Minsk, in particular by allowing it to re-establish its library in Minsk.

Members also call on the Belarusian authorities to respect the rights of national minorities in accordance with the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of 1995. It urges the Belarusian authorities to recognise the Union of Poles in Belarus.

The resolution calls on the Commission to prepare recommendations for the possible adoption of directives on visa facilitation and readmission agreements with Belarus once the relevant conditions have been met. Parliament believes that such action is crucial to achieving the main goals of EU policy towards Belarus, namely enhancing people-to-people contact, making Belarus part of European and regional processes and rendering the democratisation process in the country irreversible. It urges the Council and the Commission, in this context, to consider the scope for reducing the cost of visas for Belarusian citizens entering the Schengen Area and simplifying the procedure for obtaining visas. The long-term objective is visa-free travel between the EU and Belarus. Parliament urges the Belarusian authorities to sign the visa-free travel agreement for border zone inhabitants with neighbouring EU countries.

Parliament goes on to call on the Government of Belarus immediately to establish a moratorium on all death sentences and executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty (as provided for by UN General Assembly Resolution 62/149 of 18 December 2007), to commute without delay the sentences of all prisoners currently on death row to terms of imprisonment, to bring domestic legislation into line with the country's obligations under international human rights treaties and to ensure that the internationally recognised standards for fair trials are rigorously respected.

Lastly, Parliament calls on the Commission to make full use of the possibilities to support civil society and democratic developments in Belarus via the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights and stresses at the same time that support for democratic opposition must be an integral part of the gradual re-engagement process with Belarus.