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19. Notes that the Commission's action 'Netd@ys Europe' associates European cinema with schools; believes that it would be advantageous in this connection, to widen the scope of such projects so as to encourage cooperation, for example, through school films, introductions to the media professions and invitations addressed to film directors to visit schools as 'guest speakers', etc. Further proposes that the MEDIA Plus programme should contribute in raising pupils' awareness and interest in European cinema; Points out that a Pan-European Children's Network would be an efficient way to disseminate and raise awareness of European films of high quality;
20. Calls on the Member States to promote collaboration between teachers and artists with a view to encouraging pupils to learn about the performing arts at school in a European context;
21. Urges the improvement of quality and access to the pedagogical services of museums, theatres, libraries and other cultural structures; calls on schools to open themselves up to these cultural centres and institutions, contacts and exchanges which can only be mutually beneficial;
22. Emphasises that children's participation in artistic and cultural activities is an important factor in developing their creative skills and that the development of creative potential benefits their future personal and professional lives; stresses, in this connection, the importance of cooperation between schools and homes in greatly helping to achieve this objective;
23. Welcomes the fact that there is a growing recognition at all levels in the EU that the educational and professional success of individuals depends on development of school curricula which value both academic and creative abilities alike;
24. Urges schools, homes, cultural institutions and creative artists and intellectuals to cooperate more closely in the field of cultural education; urges schools to take greater advantage of the opportunities offered by the diverse cultural backgrounds of their pupils for the purposes of cultural education;
25. Stresses the importance of pupil exchange schemes, class trips to other countries and language teaching in becoming acquainted with and experiencing European and non-European cultures and therefore calls on the Member State and European Union authorities to promote such initiatives to a greater degree;
26. Considers that music, fine arts and theatre are a fundamental component of the cultures and history of the individual Member States and of Europe's cultural heritage and therefore recommends these disciplines are given a higher priority in school education;
27. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, and the governments of the Member States.
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P5_TA(2004)0121**EU-Russia relations****European Parliament recommendation to the Council on EU-Russia relations (2003/2230(INI))***The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA) between the European Union and Russia, which entered into force on 1 December 1997,
- having regard to the Common Strategy of the European Union on Russia, the period of application of which has been extended to 24 June 2004,

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- having regard to the Commission's Country Strategy Paper and the TACIS National Indicative Programme for Russia,
 - having regard to the preliminary conclusions drawn by the International Election Observation Mission on the State Duma elections in the Russian Federation on 7 December 2003,
 - having regard to recent action by the Russian judiciary against Yukos and the Open Society Institute,
 - having regard to the Presidency Conclusions of the Brussels European Council of 12 December 2003, in particular to the request to the Council and the Commission to draw up assessment reports on all aspects of the Union's relationship with Russia,
 - having regard to the Commission communication on 'Wider Europe — Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours' (COM(2003) 104) and its resolution of 20 November 2003 ⁽¹⁾ on the same subject,
 - having regard to its resolution of 20 November 2003 on the 12th EU-Russia Summit held in Rome on 6 November 2003 ⁽²⁾,
 - having regard to its earlier resolutions on the implementation of the Common Strategy, the Northern Dimension, Kaliningrad, Chechnya, Ukraine and South Caucasus,
 - having regard to the proposal for a recommendation to the Council by Bastiaan Belder on behalf of the EDD Group on EU-Russia relations (B5-0438/2003),
 - having regard to Rule 49(3) and Rule 104 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy and the opinion of the Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy (A5-0053/2004),
- A. whereas, owing to its size, resources and policies, Russia plays a crucial role for security and stability in Europe and whereas the EU conducts a policy of constructive engagement vis-à-vis Russia,
- B. whereas Russia's importance as a direct neighbour of the EU will further increase as a result of EU enlargement and, having regard to the result of the elections to the State Duma, cooperation between the European Parliament and the Duma is an even more exacting task,
- C. whereas the EU and Russia have common interests in trade and the economy, with the EU constituting Russia's biggest export market and its most important source of imports; whereas the EU has an interest in improving the security of its energy supplies from Russia and wishes to develop its imports, provided that shipments comply with international safety and environmental requirements, and whereas these two factors taken together offer considerable potential for investment in Russia which could help the country's economic modernisation, whereas common interests should be linked to shared values upon which to develop a genuine and balanced partnership,
- D. whereas a successful and increasingly broad-based economic development in Russia is in the interests also of the EU, in particular since it would provide Russia with further resources to deal with a range of challenges such as improving nuclear safety, reducing pollution of the environment, improving public health and taking more effective measures against the spread of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, and would raise the standard of living, which could help to reduce crime, drug use and trafficking,

⁽¹⁾ P5_TA(2003)0520.

⁽²⁾ P5_TA(2003)0519.

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- E. whereas huge volumes of radioactive material are stored under alarming conditions on the Kola Peninsula, close to the EU border; whereas plans to continue operating for many years to come a number of first generation nuclear power plants which do not fulfil international safety standards are also a matter of concern; whereas, at the same time, the EU and Russia have the ambition of inter-connecting their electricity grids by 2007,
- F. whereas the delay in transmitting the Kyoto protocol for ratification to the Duma is preventing this treaty from entering into force, thus weakening the international multilateral framework,
- G. whereas organised crime, including drug trafficking and trafficking in human beings, is creating major problems in Russian society, is a disruptive factor in relations with the EU and requires effective border controls,
- H. whereas the EU and Russia can contribute to enhanced common security in Europe through more intense dialogue and cooperation on controlling arms exports, on issues arising from the Non-Proliferation Treaty, on the security problems linked to international crime, on strategies for combating terrorism and preventing terrorist attacks and on possible solutions to conflicts in trouble spots in Eastern Europe,
- I. whereas the massive persistent human rights violations in Chechnya and the continuing absence of a credible peace and reconciliation process are perpetuating the suffering of the inhabitants of the republic and continue to dissuade those who have fled from returning; whereas Russia should guarantee that international organisations can operate in the area; whereas the experts of the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture who visited Chechnya in May 2003 were prompted by their findings to take the unusual step of issuing a public statement which included the warning that 'a state must avoid the trap of abandoning civilised values'⁽¹⁾,
- J. whereas to portray the conflict as simply one between terrorists and forces seeking to uphold law and order is to distort it, even though terrorist activities continue and have shown signs of increasing; whereas actions of the security and military forces could be seen as counter-productive in that they contribute to the creation of a climate of dread and hopelessness, inciting a desire for retaliation among family members of victims and in this way facilitating the recruitment of would-be assassins and suicide attackers,
- K. whereas over the last decade the war in Chechnya has left over 200 000 people dead out of an original Chechen population of one million inhabitants, turned hundreds of thousands into refugees, left tens of thousands injured, tortured, handicapped or traumatised and caused tens of thousands of deaths among the Russian military,
- L. whereas it is alarmed by instances of applicants to the European Court of Human Rights and of members of their families disappearing or being killed,
- M. whereas the ongoing conflict in Chechnya and the massive human rights violations taking place there are an insurmountable obstacle to the development of a genuine partnership between the EU and Russia,
- N. whereas Chechnya is not only an 'internal affair' of Russia's, in that violations of human rights are self-evidently threats to international security, of a kind already felt in some neighbouring countries,

⁽¹⁾ Public statement concerning the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation, found at <http://www.cpt.coe.int/en/states/rus.htm>

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- O. whereas the foundations of the EU's policy on Russia, notably the PCA, the Common Strategy and the TACIS programme, were laid a number of years ago and whereas these instruments have not yet been fully used, but should be reviewed and adjusted to the New Neighbours-Wider Europe strategy,
- P. whereas the PCA is expected to be extended to the new Member States like any other international agreement concluded by the EU, but Russia is apparently seeking to use it as a bargaining chip and to introduce new conditions for agreeing to the PCA's extension, which is unacceptable to the EU,
- Q. whereas ratified border agreements between Russia on the one hand, and the acceding countries Estonia and Latvia on the other, are still not in place,
- R. whereas Article 2 of the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement makes clear that the partnership is based on the common values of respect for democratic principles and human rights, as defined in particular in the Final Act adopted by the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe held in Helsinki and Geneva and the OSCE Charter of Paris for a New Europe; whereas the European Convention on Human Rights, to which Russia acceded after the signing of the EU-Russia Partnership and Co-operation Agreement, provides a further important reference for common values,
- S. whereas Russia's further democratisation, especially in terms of free and fair elections, freedom of the media, respectful treatment of non-governmental organisations, adherence to fundamental principles in relation to the rule of law, such as non-interference by political authorities in judicial proceedings, equality before the law and the right to due process, and Russia's possible integration into more comprehensive political, economic and security structures are interrelated processes,
- T. whereas, as a member of the OSCE and the Council of Europe, Russia has committed itself to upholding universal and European values and, as stated in the Commission's communication on relations with Russia (COM(2004) 106) Russian convergence with these values will to a large extent determine the nature and quality of the EU-Russia partnership,
- U. whereas no attempt to treat democracy, the rule of law and human rights issues as sectoral issues having no real connection with the overall development of EU-Russia relations is acceptable,
- V. whereas the elections to the State Duma of 7 December 2003 were preceded by an election campaign marked by extensive use of administrative resources and control of the media, with the aim of favouring government-friendly parties; whereas the elections failed to meet international standards and represented a step backwards in the democratisation process,
- W. whereas the policy of the European Union and its Member States towards the Russian Federation has failed to contribute significantly to checking or even stopping the weakening of the rule of law and democracy,
- X. whereas Russia must do its utmost to resolve the frozen conflicts in South Caucasus and contribute to the stability of the countries in the region by respecting fully their sovereignty and territorial integrity,
- Y. whereas it is essential that the Russian Federation honour the commitments it gave on 19 November 1999 at the OSCE Summit in Istanbul, in particular to close Russian military bases in Georgia and Moldova,
- Z. whereas the EU and Russia have on many occasions pleaded for a world order based on a multilateral framework and joint efforts should be envisaged to reform international organisations and make them more efficient,

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- AA. whereas the EU and Russia have declared the long-term objective of creating a common economic space, a common space of freedom, security and justice, a space of cooperation in the field of external security and a space of research and education, including cultural aspects; whereas few questions on the actual meaning of this have yet received any answer, although the European Parliament welcomes the acceptance by Russia of the EU Common Customs document and the signing of the protocols on the exchange of information with Europol, and whereas it also remains unclear to what extent the framework for EU-Russia relations and the Wider Europe policy framework should be brought in line with each other,
- AB. whereas uncoordinated statements by leaders of Member States have rendered negotiations with Russia on the Kaliningrad transit problem excessively difficult; whereas after the last EU-Russia summit, astonishing statements on Chechnya directly contradicting well-established and fully-reasoned EU positions were made; whereas Member States and top EU representatives gave conflicting signals following the Yukos affair and whereas at the end of the summit, statements were made on the Yukos affair reaffirming the need to guarantee equitable, transparent and non-discriminatory procedures, which have since been belied by events,
- AC. whereas Russia has not undergone a transition of the kind envisaged when the international community, including the EU, formulated its basic response to developments there a decade ago; whereas if instead, contrary to the common values on which the EU-Russia bilateral relationship is to be built, a 'managed democracy' is being consolidated, if economic reforms remain relatively slow, at least as long as the extractive industries continue to prosper and if, in practice, pursuit of increased leverage on some neighbours is as important as the search for mutually beneficial co-operative solutions, the EU must fully take these developments into account in its assessment of its policy on Russia,
1. Recommends that the Council and the European Council focus on:
 - how developments in Russia since the EU laid the foundations for its current Russian policy have affected the potential for attaining the policy objectives set and the effectiveness of the policy instruments used,
 - listing and assigning different levels of priority for the EU's policy objectives, with a view to facilitating rational and fully defensible choices when parallel progress towards different objectives proves impossible, in particular in situations where objectives are involved that are closely related to the common values upon which the partnership is built,
 - agreeing on concrete steps to ensure consistency in the statements and actions of the leaders of its Member States, the Council as an institution and the Commission, thereby enabling the Union to exert its influence as effectively as possible, as Member States have committed themselves to in the Treaty to do,
 - giving its revised policy on Russia a new foundation which ensures transparency and continuity and at the same time is capable of providing guidance, including under changing political and other conditions in Russia;
 2. Recommends that the Council and the European Council apply with absolute consistency the principle that the partnership and its development is based on respect for common values, and make no exception for any area of cooperation, be it, for example, external security, internal security or support for Russia's accession to the WTO;

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3. Recommends that the Council and the European Council structure the revised policy on Russia around the following objectives:

- ensuring good neighbourly relations, including effective border management, reinforced and better-implemented cross-border cooperation and effective measures to address 'soft security' problems such as nuclear hazards, pollution, cross-border crime and illegal migration,
- promoting human rights, democracy, independent media, civil society development, religious freedom, the rule of law and transparency, with special focus on urgently seeking an improvement in the situation in Chechnya,
- co-operating in addressing the 'frozen conflicts' in the south Caucasus, contributing in a serious manner to the solution of the Transnistria issue and controlling the international arms trade and promoting disarmament and non-proliferation,
- exploiting the potential for increased trade, which Russian WTO membership would facilitate, further intensifying the Energy Dialogue, not least with a view to obtaining Russia's ratification of the Energy Charter Treaty, and deepening economic relations, while taking into account safety and environmental factors amongst other things; co-operating on the development of trans-European transport, energy and IT networks, with the support of the recently widened lending mandate for the European Investment Bank, as well as co-operating on satellite technologies,
- supporting efforts to improve public health and other aspects of social development in Russia, with special emphasis on the Kaliningrad region, with a view to helping to diminish the gap in standards of living as between the enlarged EU and this and other Russian regions; following the settlement of the issue of transit between the Russian mainland and the Kaliningrad exclave, making joint efforts to prevent any further deterioration of the situation in the region,
- promoting partnerships involving regions, towns, NGOs and universities;

4. Recommends that the Council make a specific analysis of the tendency of negotiations between the EU and Russia to suffer delays and become unnecessarily complicated; believes that a lack of co-ordination on the EU side has in some cases contributed to this by slowing down the definition of EU positions or by encouraging Russia to seek to influence these positions through dialogue with individual EU Member States; urges greater respect, in particular from leaders of Member States, for the need and obligation to refrain from actions which could weaken the EU's ability to exert influence;

5. Recommends that the Council not depart from its position that Partnership and Co-operation Agreements must be extended promptly to all the new Member States;

6. Recommends that the Council demand that Russia immediately sign and ratify the negotiated border agreements with the accession states Estonia and Latvia;

7. Welcomes the Commission communication on 'Wider Europe — Neighbourhood' and the proposals on a New Neighbourhood Instrument; expects this initiative to play a vital role in future EU-Russia relations and takes the view that it may provide a framework for building a privileged security and economic partnership with Russia; considers that, in this process, special importance should be given to shaping and monitoring the common external borders; as a first step calls for pilot projects on cross border co-operation to be introduced as soon as possible, based on increased co-ordination of projects carried out within the framework of existing instruments;

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8. Recommends that the Council focus on co-operation on combating cross-border crime, including trafficking in drugs and human beings, and child pornography, and also found on preventing illegal migration, demanding at the same time more effective action on Russia's part against organised crime;

Chechnya

9. Emphasises that the situation in Chechnya is very much at odds with the values and principles upon which modern Europe is built; considers the lack of dialogue on Chechnya to be morally and politically indefensible, incompatible with the shared wish to deepen co-operation on internal and external security and incompatible with the real security interests of both Russia and the EU;

10. Believes that Mr Kadyrov's success in the recent presidential election in Chechnya is the result of an unfair pre-election phase;

11. Gravely concerned by the failure until now to bring about a positive resolution of the case of Arjan Erkel and deeply regretting the lack of any progress in resolving this dramatic case, calls for a firm political commitment on the part of the Russian Federal and local authorities, the Commission and Council to ensure the safe release of Mr Erkel;

12. Recommends that the Council revive and further develop the two-track approach according to which the EU should actively pursue a change in Russia's policy in relation to Chechnya, while at the same time continuing cooperation with Russia in other areas; stresses that the launch of an inclusive, genuine peace and reconciliation process remains an urgent necessity;

13. Asks the Council to instruct the Commission and the High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy to study the Peace Plan presented by Iiyas Akhmadov, and all other peace proposals, and to present their conclusions to the Council and the Parliament;

14. Recommends that the Council:

- increase its capacity to analyse developments in Chechnya, the repercussions of the conflict on Russian society as a whole and how this conflict influences the prospects for attaining different Russian as well as EU policy objectives,
- prepare detailed proposals for alternative approaches to the conflict, fully taking into account important aspects of the conflict such as its deep historic roots, the lack of interest in ending it on the part of actors who under the current semi-anarchic conditions in the republic can conduct lucrative unofficial and criminal economic activities there, the sociological characteristics of Chechen society, the need for massive reconstruction efforts and the possibility of the EU contributing thereto if requirements for the aid to be effective can be met, the terrorism aspect and, indeed, legitimate Russian security concerns,
- propose to Russia appropriate fora and formats for further dialogue on Chechnya, stressing the logical and necessary links, primarily to broader co-operation on internal and external security issues, and those that such a dialogue could favour the general development of the partnership by strengthening public support for it,
- continuously renew calls on Russia to do its part in stopping the human rights violations in Chechnya, to investigate disappearances, reports of torture and other crimes, to prosecute the perpetrators and ensure that court proceedings comply with all legal requirements, to allow UN rapporteurs to visit the republic in accordance with their requests, to allow international staff of UN agencies, humanitarian aid, human rights organisations, media and journalists to work in Chechnya and to immediately stop the use of pressures against the internally displaced persons in Ingushetia to return to Chechnya against their will and despite the still very difficult security situation there,

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- vigorously pursue the start of a dialogue between Moscow authorities and all representatives of the Chechnyan society, with the aim of rapidly achieving a political solution to the conflict, promote the active involvement of the OSCE and signal that the EU is willing to act as a mediator;
 - use, as appropriate, the full range of measures at the EU's disposal to influence Russian policy on Chechnya and to promote security interests and conflict settlement,
 - protest in the strongest possible terms wherever applicants to the European Court of Human Rights or members of their families are tortured, disappear or are killed; insist on the responsibility of every signatory to the European Convention of Human Rights to defend the integrity of the system for human rights protection set up under this convention;
15. Believes that the deportation of the entire Chechen people to Central Asia on 23 February 1944 on the orders of Stalin constitutes an act of genocide within the meaning of the Fourth Hague Convention of 1907 and the Convention for the Prevention and Repression of the Crime of Genocide adopted by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1948;

Foreign Policy

16. Calls on the Council also to take into account the security dimension when updating the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement in the near future and reformulating the EU's common strategy vis-à-vis Russia and to formulate the objective of establishing a comprehensive area embracing the whole of Europe without divisions;
17. Recommends that the Council renew its call on Russia to comply with its OSCE commitment on troop withdrawals from the Moldovan break-away region of Transnistria, as well as with commitments in relation to troop withdrawals from the whole of Georgia; believes that the degree of progress made in the coming months with attempts at forging closer co-operation on the handling of the Transnistria issue and on an increased EU presence in the region will give an idea of the actual scope for convergence of foreign policy positions; is aware that the future development of Georgia depends to a very great extent on the behaviour of Russia and looks therefore to the latter to refrain from any attempt to interfere in Georgia in general and in the Adjara region in particular; calls on Russia to cooperate actively and constructively in solving the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia;
18. Recommends that the Council note that, by virtue of its union with Belarus, Russia has a special responsibility for promoting the development of democracy in Belarus;

Human Rights and the Rule of Law

19. Recommends, in connection with the creation of a common area of freedom, security and justice that the Council insist on full respect for human rights and the rule of law; and emphasise the importance of equitable, transparent, non-discriminatory and proportionate application of law;
20. Is aware that the privatisation process in the 1990s was carried out in a chaotic economic climate which gave rise to instances of dishonest and corrupt conduct; recognises that there are several possible ways of dealing with those actions which, despite the ill-developed legal framework at the time, can be identified as illegal; stresses, however, that respect for the principles of equality before the law and non-interference by political authorities in judicial proceedings, as well as respect for the rights of defendants, are fundamental for democratic states upholding the rule of law; recalls that these principles enshrined in the 1993 Russian Constitution form an integral part of the international obligations which the Russian Federation freely assumed when it ratified the European Convention on Human Rights in 1996, and that it must therefore respect its obligations not only in word but also in deed;

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21. Regrets that recent moves by the Russian authorities against Yukos and the Open Society Institute were such as to arouse strong suspicion of political interference in the judicial process; calls on the authorities to treat all prisoners fairly;
22. Calls on the Council to urge the Russian Government to respect the rights of national minorities, in particular by making primary education available in the languages of national minorities, and to accept the use of scripts other than Cyrillic in the writing of these languages;
23. Recommends that the Council encourage Russia to join the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) and take advantage of the support which this cooperation arrangement can offer;

TACIS

24. Notes that the narrow concept of technical assistance, which is the basis for the TACIS programme, reflects unrealistic expectations in relation to the transition process at the time of inception of the programme; points out that the usefulness of TACIS as a support for the above policy objectives is also seriously limited by the burdensome and excessively time-consuming procedures associated with it; looks forward to the new instrument envisaged by the New Neighbours-Wider Europe strategy when the regulation expires in 2006; recommends that the Commission exploit all opportunities for using the TACIS programme more flexibly and in a decentralised way until the current regulation expires; recommends the strengthening of the TACIS democracy programmes;
25. Recommends that the Council pursue a general exemption from Russian VAT for all TACIS aid, since problems with existing refund-arrangements now hamper the implementation of many aid projects; recommends that the Member States improve their provision of information to the Commission on their aid projects in Russia;

Kaliningrad

26. Recommends that the Council pay special attention to the Kaliningrad region; welcomes the commitment shown by Russia to rapid implementation of the agreement on transit of persons; expresses the hope that more effective EU-Russia co-operation on social, environmental and economic development projects in the region can be achieved;

Environment and Public Health

27. Welcomes the cooperation between the EU and Russia within the framework of the Northern Dimension Action Plan, in particular the Environmental Partnership and its Support Fund; insists on practical implementation of Northern Dimension projects; stresses that, as obstacles to the launch of projects to address nuclear hazards in Russia are being removed, the EU should make sure that it can continue its financial contribution by keeping resources for this available; urges Russia to ban access to its ports for single-hull oil tankers that are liable to ice over; urges also that the opportunities afforded by the Northern Dimension partnership on public health and social welfare established in Oslo on 27 October 2003 be exploited;
28. Stresses the importance of Russia ratifying and implementing the Espoo Convention on Environmental Assessment in a Transboundary Context in order to develop effective environmental protection measures for the Baltic Sea; calls on Russia to accelerate the phasing out of single hull tankers and to carry out proper environmental impact assessments prior to oil extraction or the establishment of new large-scale ports or when extending the life of nuclear power plants;

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29. Calls on the Commission and the Member States, in connection with the transport of oil, to make efforts to ensure that single-hull tankers sailing from Russian ports no longer operate in the Baltic Sea or other particularly sensitive waters such as the Caspian Sea or the Black Sea, and to further tighten the amendment to the Marpol Convention adopted in December 2003 providing for a transitional period up to 2010, for example by means of a request by the Member States to the International Maritime Organisation to declare the Baltic Sea, the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea particularly sensitive areas;

30. Calls on the Council to renew efforts to secure Russia's ratification of the Kyoto agreement; points to the fact that this agreement is particularly valuable for Russia, because of the choice of reference year in connection with the fixing of emission quotas and the huge potential for improvements in energy efficiency in the country; regrets that Russia nevertheless keeps delaying its ratification of the Protocol and thereby also its entry into force;

Foreign trade

31. Calls on the Commission to support Russia in the process of drawing closer to the WTO; considers that investors and traders on both sides need a predictable, stable, non-discriminatory, rules-based system of business relations, which are of great common interest to both sides; points out that restructuring and development of services sectors, notably insurance, banking and other financial sectors, is an important condition for sustainable economic growth in Russia and that there is a considerable potential for trade, investment and other forms of cooperation there;

32. Calls on the Commission to draw particular attention to the need to develop legislation and thereby guarantee the key prerequisites for investment and trade in Russia;

Common European Economic Space

33. Draws attention to the concept of the Common European Economic Space, to which the EU and Russia committed themselves at the 12th EU-Russia Summit, which could further the integration of Russia's and the EU's economic and social structures;

34. Supports the Common European Economic Space as a long-term process that has three major dimensions:

- (i) regulatory convergence aimed at the harmonisation of Russia's legal and economic systems and of its technical, corporate and financial standards with international and European practice,
- (ii) liberalisation of trade and investment, reciprocal opening of the markets and elimination of trade and investment barriers with the final perspective of establishing a Free Trade Area,
- (iii) integration of the EU's and Russia's infrastructure systems in energy, transport, telecommunications and other relevant areas;

Energy

35. Welcomes the progress made in the EU-Russia Energy Dialogue aimed at establishing an energy partnership between the EU and Russia, as part of the Common European Economic Space; recognises Russia's important role as energy supplier, and the EU's importance for investments in this field, in particular as regards new, more environmentally-friendly techniques; calls on the Council and Commission to consider more institutionalised forms for energy co-operation;

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36. Recommends that the Council underline that the EU market can be opened for Russian electricity exports only if electricity production in Russia takes place under sufficiently safe conditions, which, first of all, presupposes phasing out first generation RBMK reactors, safety upgrades of all other nuclear reactors to the IAEA standards and also improved management of radioactive waste and measures to reduce environmental pollution; underlines the possibility of the assistance which the EU, its Member States, other states and international financial institutions can provide in the nuclear safety and environmental fields and calls for full implementation of the agreement of 21 May 2003 on the Multilateral Nuclear Environment Programme in the Russian Federation;

37. Emphasises that both sides should undertake decisive and concerted actions in the following directions:

- (i) working out a common blueprint for the development of energy markets, to reorganise natural monopolies and convergence of regulation systems, and to establish a joint consultative mechanism for exchange of information and coordination of new developments in the energy markets. The EU and Russia should also set the framework for a level playing field to enable direct investments in both regions,
- (ii) moving the EU-Russia Energy Partnership to a new qualitative level as stressed in the Fourth Progress report on the Energy Dialogue tabled during the recent EU-Russia Summit. In this framework, issues of nuclear trade, security of supply and demand, energy conservation and advanced forms of cooperation in the energy sector should be tackled in the most practical way;

38. Supports the construction of the northern European gas pipeline, which is to deliver Russian natural gas to Central Europe and the United Kingdom, thereby enhancing security of supply in those countries;

39. Emphasises the importance of the construction of the combined oil and gas pipeline, planned for Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan for supplies to that area and for the protection of marine environments as a result of making sea transport unnecessary; points out, however, that particular account must be taken of security and anti-terrorism measures in constructing the pipeline; urges the countries concerned to apply to this project the standards of the Community directive on environmental impact assessment;

40. Points out that the interdependence of the EU and Russia in the energy sector is growing strongly and maintains that technical and legal solutions satisfactory to both sides must quickly be found in order to deal with future challenges in the sector;

Industry, research and development

41. Calls on the Russian Government to provide for the timely implementation of scheduled programmes of law Development, including the harmonisation with international standards of existing product conformity rules and certification procedures;

42. Calls on the European Investment Bank to allocate funding to small and medium-sized businesses in Russia in order to promote the restructuring of the country and consolidate the new democratic structures;

43. Emphasises that the main common priority for ICT industry today is to accelerate the process of 'Content Meeting Telecom' with major emphasis on content rich, interactive multimedia services and broadband capabilities; believes that active education campaigns and high-level support are required to encourage and widen the dialogue between all stakeholders in the dynamic development in the ICT industry;

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44. Emphasises the importance of exchanges and cooperation in the fields of research science, education and the economy; calls on the Commission to provide its support, particularly in relation to exchanges of students and researchers;

45. Emphasises the high quality of space research undertaken by strategic partners, including Russia, and the importance therefore of cooperating with Russia in that field, in order to enable both parties to benefit;

46. Emphasises the common interest in working on a common standard for third generation (3G) mobile communications;

47. Points out that Russia's participation in the EU's sixth research framework programme represents an important contribution to future relations and that consideration should also be given to an appropriate share in the financing;

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48. Instructs its President to forward this recommendation to the Council and, for information, to the Commission, the governments of the Member States, the acceding and candidate countries, the Russian State Duma and Federal Government.

P5_TA(2004)0122

EU policy towards South Caucasus

European Parliament resolution with a European Parliament recommendation to the Council on EU policy towards the South Caucasus 2003/2225(INI)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal for a recommendation to the Council by Per Gahrton on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group on EU Policy towards the South Caucasus (B5-0429/2003),
- having regard to the Council Joint Action of 7 July 2003 concerning the appointment of an EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus,
- having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia,
- having regard to the European Union Programme for Prevention of Violent Conflicts, endorsed by the European Council in Göteborg on 15/16 June 2001,
- having regard to the Council Joint Action of 25 June 2003 regarding a contribution from the European Union to the conflict settlement process in Georgia/South Ossetia,
- having regard to the conclusions adopted on 19 November 1999 by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) at the Istanbul summit,
- having regard to the recent parliamentary and presidential elections in Armenia and Azerbaijan,
- having regard to the changes which Georgia underwent in November 2003 ('rose revolution'), with a new president, the forming of a government on 25 January 2004 and the forthcoming parliamentary elections of 28 March 2004,