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10. Calls for a memorandum of understanding to be concluded between Parliament, the Council and the Commission so as to define the conditions of association of the legislators with the work of the monitoring group, if such a group is established at this stage;

11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European Central Bank, and the Committee of European Securities Regulators and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

Belarus

P6_TA(2008)0470

European Parliament resolution of 9 October 2008 on the situation in Belarus after the parliamentary elections of 28 September 2008

(2010/C 9 E/04)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Belarus, in particular that of 22 May 2008 ⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to the Commission's declaration of 21 November 2006 on the European Union's readiness to renew its relationship with Belarus and its people within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP),
 - having regard to the Declaration by the Presidency of the Council on behalf of the EU, of 26 August 2008, concerning the release of Sergei Parsyukevich and Andrei Kim,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions of 15-16 September 2008 on Belarus,
 - having regard to the preliminary findings, of 29 September 2008, of the OSCE Election Observation Mission in Belarus,
 - having regard to the statement by the Presidency of the Council of the European Union on the parliamentary elections in Belarus of 30 September 2008,
 - having regard to Rule 103(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas, following the release by the Belarusian authorities between 16 and 20 August 2008 of the political prisoners Mr Alyksandr Kazulin, Mr Sergei Parsyukevich and Mr Andrei Kim, no more internationally recognised political prisoners are currently incarcerated in Belarus,
- B. whereas the release of the political prisoners has been seen by the EU as a significant step towards the adoption by Belarus of the fundamental values of democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and was made one of the preconditions for reviewing the restrictive measures currently applying to certain leading political figures in Belarus, and for gradually restoring relations with Belarus,
- C. whereas President Alexander Lukashenko publicly called on 10 July 2008 for the elections to be conducted openly and democratically, and reiterated this during a television appearance on 29 August 2008, promising that the elections would be unprecedented in terms of fairness,
- D. whereas the democratic conduct and pluralistic aspect of the parliamentary elections scheduled for 28 September 2008 was seen by the EU as another opportunity for Belarus to demonstrate its respect for democratic values and European standards,

⁽¹⁾ Texts Adopted, P6_TA(2008)0239.

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- E. whereas in this context the EU welcomed the deployment of the OSCE/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) observers, stressed the importance of guaranteeing those observers effective access to all stages of the electoral process, including the counting of votes, and underlined in particular the importance of guaranteeing the rights of the opposition as regards both the right to stand and access to electoral monitoring commissions and the media,
- F. whereas the EU, in the event that the election proceeded smoothly, was prepared to begin to review the restrictive measures against Belarusian leaders, and to take positive and concrete measures leading to a gradual re-engagement with Belarus,
- G. whereas the request from the United Democratic Forces of Belarus for the government to engage in an open dialogue on the election process remained unheeded; whereas the opposition candidates raised concerns over the fairness of the electoral process, referring to their lack of confidence in the process of voting and in the expected conduct of the vote count,
- H. whereas the OSCE Election Observation Mission stated in its preliminary conclusions that although there had been some minor improvements, the elections of 28 September 2008, which took place in a strictly controlled environment with a barely visible campaign and were marked by a lack of transparency in vote counting and in aggregating results from various polling stations, ultimately fell short of internationally recognised democratic standards,
- I. whereas the opposition, which did not win any of the 110 seats, denounced the election as a farce, expressing its fears that President Lukashenko's 'flirt' with democracy is over and calling on the EU and the US not to recognise the results of the election,
- J. whereas Lidiya Yarmoshyna, head of the Belarus Central Election Commission, declared the elections had been 'free and fair',
- K. whereas around 800 opposition supporters protested in Minsk late on election day,
1. Expresses its satisfaction that the political prisoners Mr Alyaksandr Kazulin, Mr Sergei Parsyukevich and Mr Andrei Kim have been released; still expects, nevertheless, that they will enjoy all the civic rights guaranteed to all Belarusian citizens by the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus;
 2. Regrets that the significant progress which the EU had hoped for, in the interests of the Belarusian people, in the democratic development of Belarus did not materialise and that, despite some minor improvements, the 28 September 2008 parliamentary elections in Belarus ultimately fell short of international standards;
 3. Believes that the parliament elected in Belarus is of questionable democratic legitimacy;
 4. Is concerned that the opposition-staged rally on 28 September 2008 in Minsk was termed a gross violation of public order by the interior ministry, and is also concerned by reports that information on the rally will be submitted to the Office of the Prosecutor-General for legal review; calls on the Belarusian authorities to respect the fundamental rights of freedom of assembly and expression, as defined by the Belarusian constitution;
 5. Points out that, while the EU has taken note of the recent release of several democratic opposition activists and harboured hope of an improvement in the organisation of the elections, the persistent failure to organise free and fair elections will be a further set-back for Belarus and will remain a serious challenge to relations between Belarus and the European Union;
 6. Calls on the Belarusian Government to confirm its statements about its willingness to improve cooperation with the EU and to create more favourable conditions for the commencement of discussions between the EU and Belarus;

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7. Calls in this context on the Belarusian Government to move towards genuinely democratic elections in the future in accordance with international democratic standards by introducing changes to electoral law and practice, such as:

- (a) creating fair conditions and opportunities for all candidates to conduct a genuine electoral campaign;
- (b) ensuring that all parties participating in elections are represented at all election commission levels, in particular at precinct election commission level;
- (c) ensuring that votes cast preclude any doubts as to the possibility of fraud in this connection;
- (d) abolishing the early-voting procedure or, at least, guaranteeing that early votes cast are subject to a separate procedure from that for ordinary votes cast and that early-voting results are recorded separately in electoral protocols;

8. Urges the Belarusian Government, to respect human rights by:

- (a) making necessary changes to the Belarus Criminal Code by abolishing Articles 193, 367, 368 and 369-1, some of which, in particular Article 193, are cited by Amnesty International and which are often misused as a means of repression;
- (b) refraining from threatening with criminal prosecution, including for avoiding military service in Belarus, against students expelled from universities for their civic stance and obliged to continue their studies abroad;
- (c) eliminating all obstacles that prevent proper registration of NGOs in Belarus;
- (d) improving the treatment of and respect for national minorities, including recognition of the legitimately elected body of the Union of Poles in Belarus, led by Angelika Borys, culture, churches, the education system and the historical and material heritage,

in order to end the country's self-imposed isolation from the rest of Europe and in order for relations between the EU and Belarus to improve significantly;

9. Recalls that on 21 November 2006 the European Union declared its readiness to renew its relationship with Belarus and its people within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy as soon as the Belarusian Government demonstrated respect for democratic values and for the basic rights of the Belarusian people;

10. Calls on the Council and the Commission to continue the dialogue with and devise a policy vis-à-vis Belarus, subject to strict positive conditionality based on a gradual step-by-step approach, containing benchmarks, timetables, a revision clause and adequate financial resources;

11. Calls on the Council and the Commission to consider a selective review and possible suspension of existing restrictive measures, with a view to providing advantages for ordinary citizens and promoting the development of a free society;

12. Calls on the Council and the Commission not to lift the visa ban on those directly involved in violating democratic election standards and human rights; calls for consideration to be given to a six-month partial suspension of this sanction for other officials, provided that during that period the restrictive law on mass media adopted at the end of June 2008 is amended before it is fully implemented;

13. Calls on the Council and the Commission to take further steps towards the facilitation and liberalisation of visa procedures for Belarusian citizens, as such action is crucial to fulfil the main goal of EU policy towards Belarus, namely to facilitate and intensify people-to-people contacts and to democratise the country; urges them, in this context, to consider the scope for lowering the cost of visas for Belarusian citizens entering the Schengen Area, which is the only way to prevent Belarus and its citizens from becoming increasingly isolated; calls on the Belarusian authorities to end their practice of issuing exit visas to their citizens, in particular children and students;

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14. Calls on the Council and the Commission to consider selective application of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument ⁽¹⁾ and the European Instrument for Human Rights and Democracy ⁽²⁾ to Belarus by extending more support to Belarusian civil society and, in particular, to increase financial aid to the independent media, NGOs and Belarusian students studying abroad; welcomes the financial support given by the Commission to the Belarusian 'European Humanities University' in exile in Vilnius (Lithuania); calls on the Council and the Commission to call on the Belarusian Government, as a sign of good will and positive change, to enable the European Humanities University in exile in Vilnius to return legally to Belarus and re-establish itself in adequate conditions for its future development in Minsk; calls on the Council and the Commission to grant financial support for the independent Belarusian television channel Belsat;
15. Calls on the Council and the Commission to consider measures to improve the business climate, trade, investment, energy and transport infrastructure and cross-border cooperation between the EU and Belarus, so as to contribute to the well-being and prosperity of the citizens of Belarus, as well as their ability to communicate with and freely travel to the EU in this context;
16. Regrets the decision of the Belarusian authorities to repeatedly refuse entrance visas to members of the European Parliament and national parliamentarians in the last couple of years; calls on the Belarusian authorities not to create any further obstacles preventing the European Parliament Delegation for relations with Belarus from visiting the country;
17. Welcomes the will of the Belarusian nation to safeguard the country's independence and territorial integrity;
18. Welcomes the approach taken so far by the Belarusian authorities, despite enormous pressure, not to recognise the unilateral independence declared by South Ossetia and Abkhazia;
19. Condemns the fact that Belarus is the only country in Europe which still has the death penalty, contrary to European values;
20. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the parliaments and governments of the Member States, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Parliamentary Assemblies of the OSCE and the Council of Europe, the Secretariat of the Community of Independent States and the Parliament and Government of Belarus.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 310, 9.11.2006, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 386, 29.12.2006, p. 1.

Suspension of the WTO Doha Round

P6_TA(2008)0471

European Parliament resolution of 9 October 2008 on the suspension of the WTO Doha Round and the future of the Doha Development Agenda

(2010/C 9 E/05)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Doha Ministerial Declaration of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) of 14 November 2001,
- having regard to its previous resolutions on the Doha Development Agenda (DDA),
- having regard to the Outcome Document of the 2008 Annual Session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO, adopted by consensus on 12 September 2008 in Geneva,
- having regard to Rule 103(4) of its Rules of Procedure,