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EU-Russia summit

P7_TA(2011)0268

European Parliament resolution of 9 June 2011 on the EU-Russia summit

(2012/C 380 E/15)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the existing Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Russian Federation, of the other part ⁽¹⁾, and the negotiations initiated in 2008 on a new EU-Russia agreement, as well as to the 'Partnership for Modernisation' initiated in 2010,
- having regard to the objective shared by the EU and Russia, set out in the joint statement issued on 31 May 2003 following the 11th EU-Russia Summit held in St Petersburg, of creating a common economic space, a common space of freedom, security and justice, a common space of cooperation in the field of external security and a common space of research and education, including cultural aspects (the 'four common spaces'),
- having regard to its previous resolutions on Russia and on EU-Russia relations, in particular its resolutions of 17 February 2011 ⁽²⁾ on the rule of law, of 17 June 2010 ⁽³⁾ on the EU/Russia Summit, of 12 November 2009 ⁽⁴⁾ on the preparations for the EU-Russia Summit in Stockholm on 18 November 2009, of 17 September 2009 ⁽⁵⁾ on the murder of human rights activists in Russia and of 17 September 2009 ⁽⁶⁾ on external aspects of energy security,
- having regard to the EU-Russia human rights consultations and the latest meeting held in this context on 4 May 2011,
- having regard to the agreements signed and the joint statements issued at the EU-Russia Summit held in Rostov-on-Don from 31 May to 1 June 2010,
- having regard to the statement by the EU High Representative, Catherine Ashton, of 24 May 2011, on the Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Platon Lebedev case,
- having regard to the joint statement of the co-chairmen of the EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee issued on 18 May 2011 in Sochi,
- having regard to the agenda of the EU-Russia Summit to be held in Nizhny Novgorod on 9-10 June 2011,
- having regard to Rule 110(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 327, 28.11.1997, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0066.

⁽³⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0234.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 271 E, 7.10.2010, p. 2.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ C 224 E, 19.8.2010, p. 27.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ C 224 E, 19.8.2010, p. 23.

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- A. whereas Russia, which is a permanent member of the UN Security Council, shares responsibility with the EU for maintaining global stability, and whereas enhanced cooperation and good-neighbourly relations between the EU and Russia are of major importance for the stability, security and prosperity of Europe and beyond; whereas it is important that the EU speaks with one voice and shows solidarity in its relations with the Russian Federation and bases those relations on mutual interests and common values,
 - B. whereas the conclusion of a Strategic Partnership Agreement between the EU and the Russian Federation remains of the utmost importance for the further development and intensification of cooperation between the two partners,
 - C. whereas the EU and Russia are mutually interdependent both economically and politically; whereas the European Union continues to be committed to further deepen and develop the relations between the EU and Russia, based on a deep-rooted commitment to democratic principles,
 - D. whereas concerns remain about Russia's respect for and protection of fundamental and human rights, the rule of law, independence of the judiciary, political control of the media, repressive measures taken against journalists and representatives of the opposition and the fairness of elections; whereas the Russian Federation is a full member of the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and has therefore committed itself to the principles of democracy and respect for human rights,
 - E. whereas the European Court of Human Rights has condemned the Russian Federation for serious human rights violations in many cases and judgments; whereas the implementation of the judgments remains insufficient,
 - F. whereas many challenges at international level, in particular with regard to the Middle East, Libya, Iran, terrorism, energy security, climate change and the financial crises, will not be overcome without responsible and cooperative relations with Russia,
 - G. whereas good-neighbourly relations, peace and stability in the common neighbouring countries are in the interest of both Russia and the EU; whereas almost three years after the conflict with Georgia, Russia still does not respect the agreements of 12 August and 8 September 2008 on the withdrawal of troops to the pre-conflict positions from the Georgian occupied provinces South Ossetia and Abkhazia and does not guarantee the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) access to these territories,
1. Reaffirms its belief that Russia remains one of the European Union's most important partners in building strategic cooperation, sharing not only economic and trade interests but also the objective of acting closely together in Europe as well as at global level;
 2. Notes that the Summit in Nizhny Novgorod will focus on common challenges facing both the EU and Russia (such as the economic and financial crisis, the Partnership for Modernisation, WTO accession, energy and energy security-related issues, mobility and visa-free travel between the EU and Russia, international and regional issues, cooperation in crisis management, human rights and the rule of law);

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3. Calls on the EU and Russia to take the opportunity of the upcoming summit to intensify negotiations on a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement to be concluded in due time, based on the mutual interdependence of the EU and Russia, and stresses its strong support for a comprehensive, legally binding agreement that concerns the political, economic and social system and therefore includes all areas related to democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights, particularly fundamental rights, which should be an integral part of the agreement, provided that Russia is ready to take steps to enhance the rule of law and respect for human rights;
4. Reiterates its support for the Partnership for Modernisation; welcomes the initiative to issue a joint progress report but also stresses the need to agree on the next steps in line with results achieved so far in the context of the four European Union-Russia Common Spaces as well as with remaining gaps; supports especially the cooperation in the field of research and development and stresses that the four Common Spaces rely on the principle of reciprocity; calls therefore on the parties at the upcoming EU-Russia summit to take action to formulate concrete goals; stresses the importance of tackling the issues of an effective, independent functioning of the judiciary and stepping up the fight against corruption; stresses that the EU is prepared to contribute in every possible way to improve the effectiveness of an independent rule-of-law system in Russia; welcomes the fact that Russia has announced that it will sign the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials;
5. Hopes that the Summit will help to solve the last issues related to Russia's accession to the WTO, following the bilateral agreement in December 2010 between the EU and Russia on enabling the country to accede to the WTO; reiterates its support for Russia's accession, which will create a level playing field for business communities on both sides and will facilitate and liberalise trade in the global economy; calls on the Russian authorities to adopt a stable and fair legal framework to properly regulate business activity; stresses that a prerequisite for WTO accession is that Russia fulfils all WTO rules including renunciation of any protectionist measures, which includes the rectification of trade irritants, such as the Russia-Kazakhstan-Belarus customs union, which has led to higher consolidated tariffs;
6. Underlines that WTO membership and its implementation will help Russia to attract more foreign investment and diversify its economy through a regulatory framework which will increase investor confidence; calls on the Russian authorities not to misuse sanitary grounds for unjustified protectionist measures; calls on the Russian authorities on this basis to review the current ban on all imports of EU vegetables;
7. Takes note of the ongoing dialogue between the EU and Russia on further visa facilitation; reiterates its commitment to the long-term objective of visa-free travel between the EU and Russia, based on a step-by-step approach focused on substance and practical progress; welcomes the list of common steps (roadmap) for visa-free travel between Russia and the EU announced in May 2011; underlines that this dialogue should be in tune with the visa facilitation process concerning Eastern Partnership countries; recalls that both the EU and Russia must fully implement agreements which have been concluded; calls on the High Representative and the Commission to persuade Russia to cease issuing passports to residents of the occupied provinces of South Ossetia and Abkhazia; emphasises the necessity to prevent any breach of safety in Europe; calls for further cooperation on illegal immigration, improved controls at cross-border check-points and information exchange on terrorism and organised crime;
8. Stresses the importance of energy security and is of the opinion that Russia's energy policy vis-à-vis Member States and countries in the common neighbourhood will be a litmus test of the real seriousness of Russia's intention to follow the path of modernisation and democratisation; underlines that the supply of natural resources should not be used as a political tool; stresses that the principles of interdependence and transparency should be the basis of such cooperation, together with equal access to markets, infrastructure and investment; welcomes the interest also displayed on the Russian side in a legally binding energy framework; reiterates the EU's interest in a balanced trilateral EU-Russia-Ukraine solution for future gas supplies to

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the EU; calls for close cooperation between the EU and Russia over the supply of raw materials and rare earths, especially those that are considered critical, and calls in this context for respect for international rules, especially WTO rules;

9. Calls on the Council and the Commission to ensure that the principles of the Energy Charter and the Transit Protocol annexed thereto are included in a new Partnership Agreement between the EU and Russia to ensure a reliable and secure energy supply based on equal standards; welcomes the signature in February 2011 of an updated Early Warning Mechanism to further improve coordination in the event of supply or demand emergencies; welcomes the agreement to set up a Gas Advisory Forum which should provide input, including from industry, on developments in the Russian and European gas markets;

10. Urges the Russian Federation to step up its contribution to addressing climate change through domestic greenhouse gas reductions and especially by improving energy efficiency; calls for close cooperation between the EU and Russia with regard to the international negotiations on a comprehensive post-2012 climate policy framework under the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol;

11. Expects that the participants in the EU-Russia summit will seek a joint commitment of the EU partners to the highest safety standards, ambitious stress-testing of nuclear power plants and enhanced international cooperation after the experience of the ongoing nuclear crisis at the plant in Fukushima; considers that this applies especially to Chernobyl-type nuclear reactors still in use;

12. Underlines that the Summit comes at a crucial time in the preparations for the State Duma elections and considers it important that these elections should be free and fair and based on the implementation of election standards set by the Council of Europe and OSCE; points out that some registration procedures for political parties and candidate lists have proved to be unjustified and therefore an obstacle to free and fair elections; expresses its disagreement with any restriction of the scope for opposition parties to register for the elections and calls on Russia to take action to implement election standards set by the Council of Europe and the OSCE; urges the Russian authorities to allow OSCE/Council of Europe long-term election observation at the earliest stage and calls on the HR/VP to insist on the establishment of a mission for this purpose;

13. Reaffirms the urgent need for Russia to implement fundamental principles of democracy, the rule of law, human rights and media freedom as a basis for cooperation; calls on Russia to take concrete action to improve its human rights record and to protect journalists, human rights activists, minorities and opposition representatives from violence and intimidation;

14. Welcomes the willingness of the Russian counterpart to engage in an open and constructive way on the major issues raised by the EU representatives at the Human Rights Consultation meeting of 4 May 2011; calls for the opening of this process to an effective input from the European Parliament and the State Duma, as well as the participation of relevant Russian authorities including the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and human rights NGOs, whether the dialogue takes place in Russia or in an EU Member State; underlines the need to maintain close contacts and support programmes for the development of civil society in Russia; expresses high concern about the status of NGOs and human rights defenders in Russia; welcomes the decision of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to appoint an Ambassador at Large for human rights dialogue;

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15. Reminds the Commission of the proposal, adopted by the European Parliament in the 2011 budget, to set up an EU-Russia civil society dialogue in connection with the biennial EU-Russia Summits; calls for the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum to be included in the framework of the Partnership for Modernisation;
16. Takes note with concern of the ruling handed down by the Russian appeal court against Mikhail Khodorkovsky and his business associate Platon Lebedev on 26 May 2011 as a continuation of politically motivated court decisions; condemns political interference with the trial; welcomes President Medvedev's decision to examine this case in the Presidential Human Rights Council; welcomes the European Court of Human Rights' ruling in this case accepting Khodorkovsky's claims of unlawful detention; takes note of President Medvedev's decision to start an investigation into the criminal charges against Sergey Magnitsky; encourages the investigation committee to publish an independent and thorough report as soon as possible; welcomes the convictions for the murders of Anastasiya Baburova and Stanislav Markelov, and calls on the Russian authorities to continue their work on this case; takes note of the arrest of the suspected assassin of Anna Politkovskaya;
17. Regrets that, contrary to Russia's obligations as a member of the Council of Europe to uphold freedom of assembly, peaceful citizens' gatherings continue to be banned and violently dispersed, including a gay pride march in Moscow for the sixth consecutive year, disregarding a final ruling made in April 2011 by the European Court of Human Rights; expects EU delegations and diplomats to actively implement the Toolkit to Promote and Protect the Enjoyment of All Human Rights by LGBT People in the future;
18. Draws attention to the need for Russia to urgently resolve the issue of the legal status of the large number of non-citizens in Russia;
19. Expresses its concerns regarding the fatal incidents in Nagorno-Karabakh and welcomes the joint statement of the G8 partners published on 26 May 2011 that stresses agreement on taking a decisive step towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh; calls on Russia to help to solve the conflict instead of delivering weapons to both parties to the conflict; urges the HR/VP to take steps to prevent a potential escalation of the conflict and calls for disincentives vis-à-vis any parties that breach the Bishkek ceasefire agreement;
20. Calls on Russia to respect the agreements it has signed, to fulfil all of the conditions under the Six-point Ceasefire Agreement and to immediately withdraw its troops from the occupied Georgian territories of South Ossetia and Abkhazia to the pre-conflict positions as well as to guarantee the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) access to those territories;
21. Calls on Russia to take a constructive stance in the case of Transnistria and the negotiations about the conflict there, regards Transnistria as a test for EU-Russia mutual support in solving 'frozen conflicts' and, in this respect, calls for a resumption of the official 5+2 negotiations with the intention of arriving at a solution in the very near future (Meseberg initiative);
22. States that Russia, which has a veto power in the UN Security Council, must take up its responsibility in international crises and fully guarantee and respect the sovereignty of its neighbouring countries; in this respect urges Russia to refrain from putting pressure on Ukraine to join the Russia-Kazakhstan-Belarus customs union;

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23. Calls for further comprehensive dialogue between the Russian Federation and the United States on security issues, including the establishment of the missile defence shield;
24. Calls on the EU representatives at the EU-Russia Summit to raise all the issues referred to in this resolution;
25. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Government and Parliament of the Russian Federation, the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Misleading business directories

P7_TA(2011)0269

European Parliament resolution of 9 June 2011 on misleading business directories (Petitions 0045/2006, 1476/2006, 0079/2003, 0819/2003, 1010/2005, 0052/2007, 0306/2007, 0444/2007, 0562/2007 and others)

(2012/C 380 E/16)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 16 December 2008 on misleading directory companies (Petitions 0045/2006, 1476/2006, 0079/2003, 0819/2003, 1010/2005, 0052/2007, 0306/2007, 0444/2007, 0562/2007 and others) ⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to Rules 115(5) and 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Parliament has received more than 400 petitions concerning widespread misleading business practices by business directory companies affecting thousands of mostly small businesses in the European Union, with a significant financial impact; whereas Parliament continues to receive petitions and complaints about business directory companies,
 - B. whereas the misleading business practices in question typically consist in luring businesses, as well as professionals and non-profit entities, into being listed in a business directory free of charge; whereas signatories later discover that they have signed up to a contract with a fee,
 - C. whereas the business directory companies are often established in a different Member State from that of their victims, making it difficult for the latter to seek protection and/or redress from national authorities,
1. Regrets that Directive 2006/114/EC ⁽²⁾ on misleading and comparative advertising, which applies to business-to-business transactions, appears to be either insufficient in providing an effective remedy or inadequately enforced by Member States;
 2. Recalls that, although the Commission has no power to enforce the Directive directly against individuals or companies, it does have a duty to ensure that the Directive is adequately implemented by Member States;

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 45 E, 23.2.2010, p. 17.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 376, 27.12.2006, p. 21.