

Texts adopted by Parliament

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Provisional edition

Russia-EU Summit

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►European Parliament resolution on the EU-Russia Summit in Helsinki on 24 November 2006

The European Parliament,

– having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Russian Federation, of the other part (PCA)⁽¹⁾, which entered into force in 1997 and expires in 2007,

– having regard to the EU-Russia human rights consultations,

– having regard to the current international and European responsibilities of Russia, in its capacity as President-in-Office of the G8 and Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe,

– having regard to its previous resolutions on Russia, and in particular its resolution of 25 October 2006 on EU-Russia relations following the murder of the Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya⁽²⁾, its resolution of 23 March 2006 on security of energy supply in the European Union⁽³⁾ and its resolution of 26 May 2005 on EU-Russia relations⁽⁴⁾,

– having regard to the outcome of the 18th EU-Russia Summit, held in Helsinki on 24 November 2006,

– having regard to Rule 103(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas relations between the EU and Russia have been steadily developing over the past few years, leading to deep and comprehensive economic integration and interdependency, which is bound to increase even more in the near future,

B. whereas enhanced cooperation and good-neighbourly relations between the EU and Russia are of key importance to the stability, security and prosperity of the whole of Europe,

C. whereas the conclusion of a Strategic Partnership Agreement between the EU and the Russian Federation is of the utmost importance for this greater cooperation, in particular with regard to the further development of economic relations based on equality, transparency and respect for internationally recognised procedures, to the strengthening of security and stability in Europe by finding peaceful political solutions to regional conflicts in the joint neighbourhood, and to the further strengthening of respect for human rights, respect for the rule of law and a democratic framework as a basis for these relations,

D. whereas the rapid implementation of the four common areas, with a common economic area, an area of freedom, security and justice, an area of external security and an area of research, education and culture, should be at the heart of the negotiations on the new Strategic Partnership Agreement,

E. whereas security of energy supply is one of the biggest challenges for Europe and one of the major fields of cooperation with Russia, and whereas the EU imports approximately a quarter of its gas and oil from Russia and is the most reliable consumer of Russian exports,

F. whereas the above-mentioned EU-Russia Summit of 24 November 2006 was intended to mark the start of a new phase in EU-Russia relations and, in particular, to launch negotiations on a new framework agreement between the EU and Russia to replace the PCA, which expires in 2007,

G. whereas Poland has blocked the start of the negotiations on the new framework agreement, making the start of the negotiations conditional upon Moscow lifting a ban on Polish meat imports introduced in 2005,

H. whereas on 10 November 2006 Russia imposed a new embargo on imports of Polish meat and poultry products, saying that it was concerned about breaches of veterinary regulations; whereas Russia has recently also imposed a ban on imports of fish and fish products from the EU; whereas ahead of the above-mentioned EU-Russia Summit of 24 November 2006 Russia threatened to extend the former ban to

the whole of the EU over concerns about swine fever in Romania and Bulgaria,

I. whereas the recent killings of prominent opponents of the Russian Government have caused great concern in the whole of Europe,

J. whereas there is widespread concern in Russia, the EU and elsewhere over democracy and human rights in Russia and the inability of the Russian police and judicial authorities to find those responsible for political murders,

K. whereas border-crossing formalities are very slow at the EU-Russian borders, causing intolerable queues of lorries at some checkpoints,

L. whereas the EU should be able to unite its forces and speak with one voice in its relations with Russia,

1. Acknowledges the importance of Russia as a strategic cooperation partner, with which the EU shares not only economic and trade interests but also the objective of cooperating closely in the international arena as well as in the common neighbourhood;

2. Stresses the importance of unity and solidarity among the EU Member States in their relations with Russia; welcomes, therefore, the common EU line established at the unofficial Lahti Summit on 20 October 2006, enabling the EU to speak with one voice at its meetings with President Vladimir Putin in Lahti and in Helsinki;

3. Welcomes the open discussions on democracy and human rights at the above-mentioned EU-Russia Summit of 24 November 2006 and the Lahti Summit; emphasises, however, that the current situation in Russia gives rise to serious concern in terms of respect for human rights, democracy, freedom of expression and the rights of civil society and individuals to challenge and hold the authorities accountable for their actions;

4. Regrets the failure of the above-mentioned EU-Russia Summit of 24 November 2006 to launch negotiations on a new framework agreement between the EU and Russia and encourages the Finnish and German Presidencies to continue to work to enable the negotiating mandate for a new agreement to be adopted as soon as possible and to start negotiations without further delay;

5. Stresses that a robust defence of human rights and democratic values should be a core principle of any EU engagement with Russia; urges the Commission to send a clear signal to all parties involved that these values will not have a subsidiary status in the EU-Russia negotiating package;

6. Regrets that the fourth round of the EU-Russia human rights consultations has brought about no substantial progress in this field, which should be a priority in bilateral relations; calls therefore on the Russian Government to contribute to the intensification of the EU-Russia human rights consultations as an essential part of the EU-Russia partnership, and to allow the free functioning of domestic and international human rights organisations and other NGOs and to protect the personal safety of human rights defenders; calls on the Commission and the Council to ensure that any financial assistance granted to Russia is linked to the development of democratic standards in that country;

7. Expresses its deep concern at the latest reports from international human rights organisations and United Nations (UN) experts about the use of torture in Russian prisons and police stations and in secret detention centres in Chechnya, which includes inhumane and degrading acts committed by public officials; strongly condemns such practices and calls on the Russian authorities to investigate the abuses, immediately put an end to any misconduct and prosecute the perpetrators;

8. Emphasises the need to work together with Russia as a necessary strategic partner to ensure peace, stability and security and fight international terrorism and violent extremism, as well as address other security issues such as environmental and nuclear hazards, drugs, trafficking in arms and human beings and cross-border organised crime in the European neighbourhood in cooperation with the OSCE and other international fora;

9. Calls on the Commission and the Council to pursue joint initiatives with the Russian Government to strengthen democracy, security and stability in the common neighbourhood, in particular by means of joint activities to establish democracy and respect for basic human rights in Belarus and of joint efforts to finally resolve the conflicts in Moldova, Georgia and Nagorno Karabakh; calls on the EU and Russia to assume their responsibility as members of the Quartet (which also consists of the UN and the United States) for the resolution of the Middle East conflict and to promote efforts to hold an international peace conference on a

regional Middle East peace agreement;

10. Points out that progress towards signing and ratifying the outstanding border agreements between Estonia and Russia and Latvia and Russia remains a high priority for EU-Russia relations, and that the issue should be dealt with in a constructive and fair manner acceptable to all sides;

11. Deplores the disputes about the export of agricultural and fish products from the EU to Russia; is of the opinion that the continuation of these trade disputes seriously endangers the further development of relations between Russia and the EU; therefore calls on the Commission and the Russian Government to resolve these outstanding trade disputes as a matter of urgency; insists that the EU show the necessary solidarity with all Member States, in particular Poland, which is suffering discrimination under Russia's trade policy;

12. Expresses its concern about declarations by the Russian authorities to the effect that they will impose restrictions on EU agricultural products after the accession of Bulgaria and Romania;

13. Expresses its deepest concern about the continuing series of murders of prominent persons, such as Anna Politkovskaya, who oppose the current Russian Government or who have stood up for the basic rights of Russian citizens; emphasises that the Council and the Commission must react with all their authority and stresses that the partnership with Russia will seriously be affected if Russia fails to demonstrate its ability and strong willingness to assist in the investigations to find the killers and to fulfil its duty to stop this vicious circle and prosecute those responsible;

14. Urges the Russian Federation, as a member of the Council of Europe, to improve conditions for prisoners and put an end to difficulties of access to some of them for lawyers; points out that according to the Russian Criminal Code detainees should be imprisoned either close to their place of residence or close to the place where the trial has taken place, as exemplified by the prisoners Mr Khodorkovsky and Mr Lebedev;

15. Welcomes the agreement reached at the above-mentioned EU-Russia Summit of 24 November 2006 to phase out the fees which Russia charges to EU airlines flying over Siberia, resolving a 20-year dispute between the two sides and paving the way for EU carriers to increase the number of routes to the growing markets in Asia; notes that the dispute over charges, which cost EU airlines more than EUR 250 million a year, was one of the last hurdles the EU identified after its agreement with Russia on the country's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), which will open up new possibilities for increased cooperation and trade between the EU and Russia;

16. Expresses concern that recent changes to Part IV of the Russian Civil Code concerning intellectual property rights fall short of the standards required for the WTO (TRIPS), and still further short of the deeper commitments envisaged for a strategic partnership;

17. Welcomes the intensified EU-Russia dialogue on energy issues; underlines the strategic importance of cooperation on energy and the need to enhance EU-Russia energy relations; stresses that further cooperation in this field must be based on the principles of interdependence and transparency, as well as the importance of reciprocity in terms of access to markets, infrastructure and investment, with the objective of avoiding oligopolistic market structures and diversifying the EU's energy supply; in this context, calls on Russia to respect the principles of the Energy Charter Treaty, which entered into force in April 1998, and to increase cooperation on energy efficiency, energy saving and renewable energy;

18. Calls on the Council and the Commission to redouble their efforts to solve the border-crossing problems at the EU-Russian borders; points out that additional cross-border capacity must be built in order to accommodate an increase in the flow of goods; urges the Russian authorities to reduce queuing at the border by speeding up the inspections and by removing some of them from the border area to more remote locations;

19. Welcomes the successful outcome of the Northern Dimension Summit in Helsinki on 24 November 2006, which took place in connection with the EU-Russia Summit and in which Russia, as well as the EU, Norway and Iceland, participated; hopes that the Northern Dimension Framework Document which was adopted at the Northern Dimension Summit will provide a good basis for developing closer regional and cross-border cooperation with Russia;

20. In this regard, expresses serious concern at the measures implemented by Russia against Georgia, which are having huge economic, political and humanitarian consequences; therefore calls on the Russian authorities to lift the unjustified ban on sensitive exports from Georgia to Russia as well as to stop the

ongoing repression of ethnic Georgians living in Russia;

21. Emphasises the need for the EU to act with unity and determination in its efforts to strengthen relations with Russia; welcomes the intention of the German Presidency to give further high priority to this important issue;

22. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the Governments and Parliaments of the Member States and of the Russian Federation.

(1) OJ L 327, 28.11.1997, p. 1.

(2) *Texts Adopted*, **P6_TA(2006)0448**.

(3) *Texts Adopted*, **P6_TA(2006)0110**.

(4) OJ C 117 E, 18.5.2006, p. 235.