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Texts adopted by Parliament

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Provisional edition

European Neighbourhood Policy

P6_TA-PROV(2006)0028

A6-0399/2005

► European Parliament resolution on the European Neighbourhood Policy (2004/2166(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article I-57 of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, concerning the Union and its neighbours, which is not in force and has not yet been adopted,
- having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999 of 21 June 1999 laying down general provisions on the Structural Funds⁽¹⁾ and the Commission's proposal for a Council regulation laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund (COM(2004)0492),
- having regard to the Commission Communication to the Council and the European Parliament entitled "Wider Europe - Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours" (COM(2003)0104), its European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) strategy paper (COM(2004) 0373), its proposal for a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (COM(2004)0628), its Communication on action plans under the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) (COM(2004)0795) and the action plans for Ukraine, Moldova, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority and Tunisia,
- having regard to the Ukraine Action Plan ("the Ferrero-Waldner/Solana ten-point plan"), which the EU-Ukraine Co-operation Council approved on 21 February 2005,
- having regard to the European Security Strategy, "A Secure Europe in a Better World", which the European Council approved on 12 December 2003,
- having regard to the Second Northern Dimension Action Plan 2004-2006 as endorsed by the European Council held in Brussels on 16 and 17 October 2003,
- having regard to its resolutions on the Northern Dimension of 20 November 2003⁽²⁾ and 16 November 2005⁽³⁾,
- having regard to the conclusions of the IV Northern Dimension Ministerial Meeting held in Brussels on 21 November 2005,
- having regard to its resolution on the Barcelona Process revisited of 27 October 2005⁽⁴⁾,
- having regard to the Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean and the Middle East, which the European Council endorsed on 18 June 2004,
- having regard to the communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament entitled "Reinvigorating EU actions on Human Rights and democratisation with Mediterranean partners" (COM(2003)0294),
- having regard to the resolution of 15 March 2005 on economic and financial issues, social affairs and

education, adopted by the first Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly in Cairo,

- having regard to the Arab Human Development Report 2004 "Towards Freedom in the Arab World" of 5 April 2005, published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),
- having regard to the report by the European Parliament delegation sent to observe the elections in the Palestinian Authority from 7 to 10 January 2005,
- having regard to its resolutions of 13 January 2005 on the results of the Ukraine elections⁽⁵⁾, of 24 February 2005 on the parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova⁽⁶⁾ and of 10 March 2005 on the situation in Lebanon⁽⁷⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 20 November 2003 on "Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours"⁽⁸⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 11 June 2002 on relations between the European Union and the Arab Maghreb Union: a privileged partnership⁽⁹⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 28 April 2005 on the Annual Report on Human Rights in the World 2004⁽¹⁰⁾,
- having regard to its earlier resolutions on the neighbouring countries and regions of the enlarging EU,
- having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (**A6-0399/2005**),

A. whereas, following the European Union's enlargement on 1 May 2004, the EU's external frontiers have changed and new neighbours have been added,

B. whereas it is not in the enlarged EU's interest to draw new dividing lines with compartmentalised external frontiers, and a strategy must therefore be pursued for relations with its eastern and southern neighbours by means of which a common area of peace, stability, security, respect for human rights, democracy, the rule of law and prosperity can be created and extended,

C. whereas it is in the EU's interest to contribute to the democratic development of its neighbours, and the development of the European neighbourhood policy depends very substantially on the will of the neighbouring states and their peoples to share the same values as those on which the European Union is based,

D. whereas the ENP should have the ambitious aim of offering its partner countries privileged relations, so as to enable them to be active stakeholders in the EU's policies,

E. whereas the ENP includes both the European countries, which under the existing Treaties are entitled as a point of principle to apply for membership of the European Union, and countries that have certainly been the European Union's neighbours and close partners for a long while but cannot join the European Union; and whereas this fact in no way affects the abovementioned rights of European countries to apply for accession to the EU,

F. whereas all the neighbours, irrespective of the issue of possible membership, have an equal opportunity to establish privileged relations with the EU that are founded both on common interests and on common values, according to their own ambitions,

G. whereas there are some very peripheral island regions of the European Union in the form of islands that are located in the Atlantic Ocean but nevertheless linked to the European continent, which raises specific problems within the framework of the ENP as those islands have themselves, within their vicinity, neighbours in the form of non-EU islands with whom they share common historic links,

- H. whereas the criterion of the EU's absorption capacity is one of the Copenhagen criteria,
- I. whereas the Rose Revolution in Georgia and the Orange Revolution in Ukraine have expressed the will of the peoples of those countries to take part in the shaping of Europe, on the basis of the common values set out in the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe,
- J. whereas the Union should make every effort to support the return of Belarus to the democratic community in order for it to become a stable and prosperous partner,
- K. whereas the EU has not made full use of its strategic partnership with Russia so as to resolve the Transnistria conflict, which is one of the main reasons for Moldova's deep economic crisis,
- L. whereas peaceful development on the European continent and in the immediate neighbouring area is in the European Union's interest and it must therefore help to settle the conflicts in Transnistria, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Nagorny-Karabakh and Chechnya, for which close cooperation with Russia and Ukraine is essential, and to resolve the conflicts in the Middle East and Western Sahara,
- M. whereas the freedom movement in Lebanon and the free elections in Palestine have also been sustained by the spirit of freedom and democracy,
- N. stressing the essential positive role played by institutions such as the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations (UN) in the prevention, management and resolution of political and military crises in many regions of Europe, mainly thanks to their capacities and instruments which are supplementary to those of the EU,
- O. whereas at their summit in Chisinau on 22 April 2005 the countries cooperating within the framework of GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova) stated their clear ambition to intensify their cooperation with the EU,
- P. whereas on 31 May 2003 the European Union and its neighbour Russia decided to further strengthen their Strategic Partnership based on the same values as the ENP and the establishment of four common spaces, which must now lead to concrete results,

Towards European neighbourhood agreements

1. Declares that the aim of privileged relations with the EU's neighbours includes, as an essential precondition, an active and concrete commitment to common values in the fields of the rule of law, good governance, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the principles of a transparent social market economy and sustainable development;
2. Emphasises its aim of not settling for the status quo but of committing the European Union to support the aspirations of the peoples of our neighbouring countries to full political freedom, with democracy and justice, and economic and social development, using all diplomatic, financial and political means available;
3. Supports the enlargement of the EU on the basis of the Treaties and in accordance with the decisions taken by the European Council; emphasises that the enlargement process must be accompanied by an ambitious and substantial flexible neighbourhood policy for those European countries which are not at present EU Member States and which cannot yet join, or do not wish to join, the EU but are nevertheless aligning themselves with the values of the EU and are minded to take part in the European project;
4. Emphasises that the Nice Treaty is not an acceptable basis for further decisions on the accession of any more new Member States and therefore insists that the necessary reforms be brought into force within the framework of the constitutional process;
5. Stresses that the ENP should be tailored to the needs of the individual countries to which it applies and should not be a 'one size fits all' policy;
6. Emphasises the need to establish an effective monitoring mechanism and a readiness to restrict or suspend aid and even to cancel agreements with countries which violate international and European standards of respect for human rights and democracy, and calls on the Commission to operate a vigorous

policy of support for democratic forces in those neighbouring states, in particular by ensuring access to independent media and information;

7. Calls on the Commission to define the purpose and clear priorities of the European neighbourhood policy, thus setting criteria for the evaluation of achievements, and welcomes the idea of providing for a European neighbourhood agreement at the end of the ENP process for those countries which are not applying for EU membership but which have come closer to the European Union's body of law; asks the Commission to propose and develop specific policies to extend the ENP where feasible to Atlantic island countries neighbouring EU outermost regions adjacent to the European continent, where special questions of geographical proximity, cultural and historical affinity and mutual security may be relevant;

8. Considers it right that such a neighbourhood agreement can encourage step-by-step progress towards full access to the internal market and participation in the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), which will require appropriate financial and technical support from the EU; also considers it necessary to allow close cooperation in the field of justice and home affairs, which should also be included in the action plans, with the aim of cooperating closely in the fields of the defence of human rights, combating trafficking in drugs, weapons and human beings, combating terrorism and organised crime, asylum and visa policy and immigration;

9. Calls on the Council to strengthen the dialogue with individual ENP partner countries by inviting, where and when appropriate, participation in areas of mutual interest and of importance to the European Union, such as the CFSP, as well as inviting non-voting representatives to discussions in Council working groups in appropriate fields, e.g. the fight against terrorism (COTER), international development cooperation (CODEV), human rights (COHOM), international organisations (CONUN), etc.;

10. Considers that the joint administration of the border between each neighbour country and the EU should be an essential element of any European Neighbourhood Agreement, with a view to ensuring on the one hand the security of borders and on the other hand the development of cross-border cooperation;

11. Considers it necessary, and feasible now as a first step, to enable the partner countries to take part in all Community programmes in the fields of culture, education, youth, the information society, the environment, research and science;

12. Considers it crucial that the ENP should significantly contribute to the promotion of women's rights and economic and social rights; in this respect, calls on the Commission to include as priority matters the withdrawal of all reservations expressed by certain countries concerning the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and to fully implement the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR);

13. Calls on the Commission and the Council to use the ENP not only to strengthen political dialogue and cooperation but also to transform into practical reality the action plans with partner countries, based on the principle of differentiation according to each country's suitability and qualification, in order to open up participation in programmes and agencies such as the European Environment Agency, the European Space Agency, Eurojust and the "Intelligent Energy - Europe" Community programme for new energy resources, and also permission to tender for development and aid cooperation within EU programmes and agencies such as TACIS, PHARE and ECHO;

14. Considers it important to extend the Parliamentary Visitors Programme so as to allow people from neighbouring countries to familiarise themselves with the democratic culture of the European Parliament;

15. Considers it useful to establish a special European fund to support, in an efficient and flexible manner, initiatives promoting parliamentary democracy in neighbouring countries;

16. Considers it important that distinctions be made in the wording of action plans for the individual countries in the light of the current state of relations, progress in implementing reforms and the will of the respective neighbouring country to fulfil the agreed commitments; reaffirms that those distinctions must be based on transparent and objective criteria;

17. Considers that such action plans should serve as a tool towards achievement of the goals of potential EU membership for those countries that are eligible and ever closer partnership for the other countries included;

18. Supports the development of action plans with all countries covered by the neighbourhood policy and insists that the development of human rights, democracy and the rule of law be regarded as a key priority in all national action plans; in this respect, stresses the importance of setting up sub-committees on human rights with all the neighbourhood countries, which should help to evaluate the implementation of action plans; considers that those sub-committees should meet at least once a year and that a regular follow-up should take place at all political levels; calls on the Council and the Commission to fully involve Parliament in this assessment process and is therefore of the opinion that Parliament should be represented in the sub-committees;

19. Proposes that the Commission publish monitoring reports at annual intervals, setting out an assessment of ENP progress in the individual countries concerned, in accordance with clearly defined criteria and standards, to serve as the basis for further steps on the path to a European Neighbourhood Agreement; expects the partner countries for their part to provide detailed information for the joint monitoring process; considers that intensive discussion of the progress reports in Parliament is required;

20. Stresses, in this regard, the importance of creating a multilateral framework with all the countries concerned in which to assess jointly the cross-cutting aspects of those monitoring reports and to discuss the overall future of the ENP;

21. Regrets that in its strategy paper (COM(2004)0373) the Commission responded only to the Council's opinion and ignored Parliament's comprehensive resolution of 20 November 2003;

22. Underlines the crucial link between the EU's Russia strategy and the ENP; points out that the success of that policy in some of the ENP states depends on the relations between the EU and Russia; asks the Commission and the Council, therefore, to reformulate the Common Strategy on Russia in such a way as to entrench the same democratic, legal and human rights considerations as have been accepted under the ENP; encourages the Russian government to allow for greater flexibility and wider scope in decision-making instruments for its regions neighbouring EU countries; regards such a development as an important precondition for viable cross-border relationships;

23. Points out emphatically that Parliament, as budgetary authority, is involved under the codecision procedure in financing the ENP through the newly established European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI); calls therefore on the Commission not to separate the ENP's policy priorities from its financing through the ENPI and the allocation of budget resources, but to determine them transparently and with the participation of Parliament, having regard, in particular, to the definition of the multi-annual programmes and country strategy papers; calls on the Commission to find ways to permit the interconnection of the various instruments of external action;

24. Calls on the Commission to avoid bureaucratising the whole ENP process and to fully consult and involve not just the Council but also Parliament when developing the time-frames and content of future action plans;

25. Emphasises that, while the ENPI should serve as a means of entrenching democracy in Europe's neighbours, it must also be a vehicle for initiating progress towards democracy in non-democratic neighbours, such as Belarus, and should include funding to help with the achievement of that transformation;

26. Calls for the rapid provision of technical assistance for those neighbouring countries which have already decided on comprehensive reform programmes and are fulfilling the agreed commitments; confirms its resolve to call for a significant increase and reallocation in funding for the ENP, compatible with the future Financial Perspectives as decided by Parliament, as the ENPI is replacing the existing TACIS, MEDA and INTERREG programmes on 1 January 2007; recognises that the gradual participation in the European internal market offered under the ENP is an opportunity but also a major challenge for the neighbouring countries, and proposes that the Commission should create special financial aid to help the ENP countries in their rapprochement to the internal market, as is provided for applicant countries prior to their accession;

27. Stresses that the new EU Member States have successfully implemented the transitional reforms needed to create a market economy, democracy and civil society, and have obtained a wealth of unique, relevant reform experience which can be passed on to the neighbouring countries in eastern Europe and the Euromed region; therefore calls on the Commission to establish the necessary mechanisms in order to enable the Member States to share their reform experiences with the ENP partner countries, and to act as a facilitator of this process;

28. Stresses the need to include and support, in the short and medium term, strong anti-corruption measures in all the action plans;
29. Calls for assurances that local and regional authorities and also public organisations in the Member States and in neighbouring states will be involved in the development and implementation of the ENP;
30. Calls on the Commission to propose a separate Regulation providing the necessary flexibility for the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (Budget line 19-04), as the only EU external instrument which does not require host country consent, and also to concede the restoration of full parliamentary oversight of the programme;
31. Underlines the importance of greater market openness, in accordance with the principles of the World Trade Organization (WTO); points out that in the Barcelona Declaration the progressive establishment of a free trade area has been agreed for goods with 2010 as a target date; considers it important for all ENP partner countries to be encouraged and supported in their path towards WTO membership;
32. Supports the Commission's idea of offering Russia support through the new ENPI in addition to existing forms of cooperation, but notes the need to relate this support to progress reports based on proper monitoring;
33. Considers it necessary to consolidate information policy on the European Union, its decision-making procedures and its values; welcomes the fact that the EU-funded news channel Euronews is already broadcasting in Russian, and considers it desirable to do the same in Arabic; also welcomes the EU-funded Deutsche Welle programmes, the aim of which is to disseminate European democratic values in Belarus;
34. Considers that, whilst the possibility of membership of the EU must remain the ultimate incentive for all European countries to follow the common European ideals and participate in the European integration process, the fact of non-membership should not be used as a stick or a whip to punish non-member countries; emphasises that all bilateral relations and all existing multilateral organisations must be utilised in promoting our goals of European cooperation and integration;

Linking neighbouring countries with one another

35. Emphasises that it is the aim of the ENP not only to strengthen bilateral relations between the EU and the neighbourhood countries but also to create networks of cooperation and bring about the development of regional integration between neighbouring countries; takes the view in this connection that consideration should be given to creating for the European neighbour states an instrument along the lines of the European Economic Area, covering not only participation in the single market but also political matters; expresses its concern at the serious delays in this area and believes it vital for the Union, together with all neighbourhood policy partners, to undertake to activate all political and institutional instruments capable of supporting the development of the multilateral dimension;
36. Calls in this connection for greater emphasis to be placed on developing the regional and subregional dimensions, in view of the specific geographical, historical and political characteristics which set the neighbouring countries apart from the Union countries;
37. Calls on the Commission to provide a clearer definition of the relationship between the ENP and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, which it plans to relaunch via a communication on this subject;
38. Calls in this regard on the Council, the Commission and the Member States to make more visible and concrete efforts to strengthen interaction with the OSCE and the Council of Europe so as to provide the EU with the essential knowledge and instruments it lacks, especially in the fields of monitoring the implementation of human rights, democracy and rule of law commitments and of managing and resolving political and military crises;
39. Considers that the Council of Europe should be strengthened and developed to become the most important pan-European forum of cooperation, particularly as regards respect for, and the implementation of, democracy and human rights conventions, and that its efficiently functioning democratic organisation can also be given new tasks; takes the view that the Council of Europe could be a pan-European forum for all the different European "spaces" we are now trying to create through both bilateral and multilateral

channels;

40. Urges the European Union to sign up to the European Convention on Human Rights in order to strengthen the link between the Council of Europe framework and the EU;

41. Calls for increased and better focused pan-European cooperation in all relevant fields, e.g. trans-European networks, the environment, visa regimes, justice, asylum and migration and foreign and security policy;

42. Whilst recognising the strong need for an eventual negotiated move to worldwide free-market rates for the prices enjoyed by Russia in its supply of oil and gas as well as the prices paid by Russia for transit rights through intermediary countries, nevertheless regrets the unilateral suspension by Russia of gas supplies to Ukraine on 1 January 2006, and calls on Russia not to use its market dominance as a political instrument in the conduct of its foreign policy; welcomes the satisfactory resolution of this crisis and calls on the EU to ensure a coordinated policy which guarantees security of energy supply and integrity of the pipelines in the transit countries as well as a diversified source of origin for these vital natural resources;

43. Considers that the OSCE should be used on the pan-European level in the fields covered by its mandate, whilst avoiding duplication with the Council of Europe and relevant UN agencies; underlines that the OSCE could also be useful in building bridges between the European Union and its neighbours by offering full membership to the Mediterranean and Middle East countries, or by exploring the idea of creating a separate regional organisation modelled on the OSCE; regrets the recent attempts at weakening of the role of the OSCE in its human rights and democracy safeguarding role and considers that the EU should make better and co-ordinated use of its weight in the OSCE and the Council of Europe to promote the values and standards underlying membership of those institutions;

44. Regards energy policy as an important aspect, since the EU is surrounded by the world's largest oil and natural gas reserves (Russia and the Caspian basin, the Middle East and North Africa), and many countries in the neighbourhood, such as Russia, Algeria, Egypt, Libya and Azerbaijan are suppliers or, as in the case of Ukraine, Belarus, Morocco, Tunisia, Georgia and Armenia, transit countries, and an improvement in energy network links will benefit both the EU and its partner countries; points out that the relations in the field of energy between the EU and the countries in its neighbourhood should be considered within the framework of a broader European energy policy, the aim of which would be to contribute to the diversity and security of energy supply of both the EU and its partner countries; asks the Commission to present a communication on the foreign and neighbourhood policy aspects of the energy policy;

45. Emphasises that stepping up trade and tourism between the EU and the partner countries means improving the transport networks and is likely to improve links between the partner countries, thus also making them more attractive to investment;

46. Points out that the ENP is aimed at promoting a commitment to shared values such as the pursuit of sustainable development as defined at the Johannesburg World Summit;

47. Stresses that cooperation on the environment and in such key areas as water quality and water management, waste management, air pollution, flood management and combating desertification can likewise only be achieved on a cross-frontier and regional basis;

48. Believes that the problem of legal and illegal immigration should be tackled in the context of the neighbourhood policy; calls on the Council and Commission to monitor the implementation of agreements with all neighbouring countries, particularly as regards action plans which have been or are being negotiated; calls also on the Council and the Commission specifically to monitor bilateral agreements between individual Member States and partner countries concerning immigration and, in particular, readmission;

49. Welcomes the fact that opening up the European research area is a precondition for cooperation in a knowledge-based society, and sees opportunities for regional cooperation between the partner countries in this area too;

50. Draws attention to the need to pay special attention to the sovereign states of the European continent that are not members of the European Union, specifically Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein as members of the EEA/EFTA and Switzerland as a member of EFTA having its own bilateral agreements with the EU;

considers that these close political and economic ties should be the basis for further developments and closer cooperation, as with Andorra, Monaco, San Marino and the Vatican State, all of which as appropriate should be allowed to participate in the new neighbourhood process as well;

51. Takes the view that all the candidate countries should also be involved in the neighbourhood policy, first as special partners and later as EU members playing a special role in cooperation with our future neighbours; considers it necessary for progress to be made on the opening of Turkey's borders with Armenia and for Romania and Ukraine to settle their dispute concerning the demarcation of the Black Sea continental shelf, including through recourse to the International Court of Justice in The Hague;

52. Considers that, in these circumstances, the Northern Dimension must be strengthened; underlines that special attention must be paid to relations with our huge Eurasian neighbour Russia; therefore calls for further development of the EU-Russia strategic partnership and an intensification of the cooperation within the multilateral Northern Dimension, as well as within a Wider Europe framework, avoiding a division of Europe into spheres of influence and promoting genuine pan-European partnership and cooperation;

53. Underlines on the other hand the need to strengthen EU policies in the Mediterranean region and the Middle East, not least given the accession of Cyprus and Malta, and since coming enlargements will include several countries of south-eastern Europe;

Maghreb

54. Notes that Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria have been closely linked with the European Union for a long while, as the current association agreements make plain; stresses that resolute implementation of the reforms that have begun, especially in the area of political freedom and human rights, must be given high priority; calls on the Commission to adopt an action plan for Algeria in the near future, so as to give fresh momentum to the Arab Maghreb Union; but points out that the success of this regional integration depends essentially on settlement of the question of Western Sahara and calls again on the parties concerned to enter into a constructive dialogue, within the framework of the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions;

55. Calls on the European Union to take firm measures, accompanied by an information campaign, to explain the Barcelona Process and the new ENP, so as to erase the image of a fearful Europe, more concerned with its own security and combating immigration than with the sustainable development that is both expected and necessary;

56. Welcomes the rapprochement of Libya to the Barcelona Process and expects tangible progress in implementing the announced adoption of the Barcelona body of law, which could lead to inclusion in the ENP process in future;

Middle East and Mashreq

57. Welcomes the fact that, with the elections in the Palestinian Authority in January 2005, a President has been elected in exemplary fashion and that this has given a signal to the whole Arab world; takes the view that through the reforms in the Palestinian Authority and the determination to combat terrorism new opportunities have arisen for the peace process and implementation of the Road Map; welcomes Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza strip and the northern part of the West Bank; recognises that long-lasting and genuine peace and stability in the region can only be achieved with the existence of the State of Israel within secure and recognised borders, alongside a democratic, viable Palestinian State;

58. Welcomes the fact that Jordan and Egypt are actively supporting the Middle East peace process; takes the view that the ENP should with every available means support the latest signs of democratic renewal in the Mashreq region, particularly after the Cedar Revolution in Lebanon;

59. Calls on Syria to cooperate without any further delay fully and actively in the international fight against terrorism and the international investigation into the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri as recently extended by the UN Security Council, and to fully respect internationally accepted human rights standards;

60. Welcomes the withdrawal of the Syrian army from Lebanon, and the holding of legislative elections in Lebanon in June 2005; expresses its deep concern at the recent attacks on journalists and publishers

committed to a free and independent Lebanon and calls for redoubled efforts to achieve a sovereign and democratic state of Lebanon in which all political and religious groups and communities take part in political and social life and human rights are fully respected, and calls for the full implementation of UNSCR 1559 (2004) including the disarmament of Hezbollah;

61. Urges the Egyptian authorities not to undermine the prospects recently opened up with regard, in particular, to multi-candidate presidential elections, and to press ahead with democratic reforms; expresses its deep concern, in this regard, about the conviction of Ayman Nour, a prominent liberal opposition leader, who has been recently sentenced to five years' hard labour by an Egyptian court for supposedly forging signatures on petitions used to create his political party; regards this as a seriously retrograde step and calls on the Egyptian authorities to make every effort to ensure that this case is correctly dealt with;

Eastern Europe

62. Welcomes the peaceful revolution and the democratic movement in Ukraine; recognises Ukraine's European aspirations and calls for a long-term European perspective to be established; supports the action plan and the Ferrero-Waldner/Solana ten-point plan, which represent an ambitious and substantial programme; confirms its full support for the new Ukrainian Government in implementing the announced reform package;

63. Recognises Moldova's European aspirations and calls for a long-term European perspective to be established; emphasises that democratic development of the country is beneficial for creating closer relations; considers it necessary to provide EU aid so as to help improve economic development in that country and to give the authorities, the business community and the population in Transnistria further incentives for cooperating with the EU through Chisinau; calls on all parties involved to come to a political settlement of the Transnistria issue;

64. Is concerned at the present developments in Belarus, which is a dictatorial regime in which opposition activities of any kind are suppressed; calls on the Council, the Commission and the Member States to increase their support for the civil-society activities of non-governmental organisations and of the opposition; urges the Council to raise with Russia the question of Belarus, pointing out that the democratisation of that country is in the interests of both the EU and Russia and that joint action should be taken to that end;

Southern Caucasus

65. Welcomes the fact that the European Council has, at the insistence of the European Parliament, included the countries of the Caucasus in the neighbourhood policy;

66. Takes the view that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is impeding the development of Armenia and Azerbaijan and regional cooperation as well as the effective implementation of the ENP as such; calls on both parties to refrain from unilateral actions and aggressive statements and to work for settlement of the conflict in a constructive dialogue with all the forces concerned, on the basis of respect for minority rights and on the basis of the principles of international law; emphasises the importance of continuing democratic reforms for the development of the region and its relations with the EU; urges all parties concerned to find ways to permit the gradual return of refugees on the basis of minority rights, in particular with regard to the return of Azerbaijanis to the occupied territories; calls on the member countries of the OSCE Minsk Group to coordinate more effectively their action with Heikki Talvitie, the EU Special Representative for South Caucasus, in order to move forward with negotiations;

67. Calls on the Azerbaijani authorities to put an end the demolition of medieval Armenian cemeteries and historic carved stone crosses in southern Nakhichevan, which is in breach of the terms of its 1993 ratification of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention;

68. Urges Russia and Turkey to play a constructive role with a view to laying down the basis for a peaceful resolution of the conflict and the resumption of regional cooperation; calls on Turkey, in this respect, to open up its frontiers with Armenia;

69. Takes the view that the action plan for Azerbaijan should be focused on the development of a genuine democracy and respect for human rights and the rule of law; urges the Commission, in this regard, to coordinate its action with the Council of Europe and to make every effort to support and develop the fragile Azerbaijani civil society;

70. Welcomes the peace plan for South Ossetia based on a three-stage approach, as put forward by Georgia within the OSCE at the end of October 2005; takes the view that this plan represents a fundamental step forward on the road to a peaceful and comprehensive settlement of the conflict; calls on the Council and the Commission to lend the necessary support to this proposal, facilitating the dialogue and negotiations between the two sides and helping to provide the means enabling the initiative to achieve total success;

71. Encourages full utilisation of the ENP to promote regional cooperation among countries of the southern Caucasus as an instrument for inter-state confidence building;

72. Proposes an EU stability pact for southern Caucasus – including a parliamentary and civil-society dimension modelled on the EU stability pact for south-eastern Europe – involving the European Union (with the participation of Turkey as an accession candidate), Russia, the United States and the United Nations (the Quartet); takes the view that such a stability pact is likely to help settle the regional conflicts through a dialogue between all the parties concerned and where helpful also with the countries outside the direct neighbourhood of the EU;

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73. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the governments and national parliaments of the ENP countries and Russia, the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly.

(1) OJ L 161, 26.6.1999, p. 1. Regulation as last amended by Regulation (EC) No 173/2005 (OJ L 29, 2.2.2005, p. 3).

(2) OJ C 87 E, 7.4.2004, p. 515.

(3) *Texts Adopted*, **P6_TA(2005)0430**.

(4) *Texts Adopted*, **P6_TA(2005)0412**.

(5) OJ C 247 E, 6.10.2005, p. 155.

(6) OJ C 304 E, 1.12.2005, p. 398.

(7) OJ C 320 E, 15.12.2005, p. 25.

(8) OJ C 87 E, 7.4.2004, p. 506.

(9) OJ C 261 E, 30.10.2003, p. 142.

(10) *Texts Adopted*, **P6_TA(2005)0150**.