


Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2003/2225(INI)	Procedure completed
European Union policy towards the South Caucasus		
Subject 6.40.04.04 Relations with Caucasus countries		
Geographical area Georgia Azerbaijan Armenia		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	AFET Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security, Defense		04/11/2003
		V/ALE GAHRTON Per	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	ITRE Industry, External Trade, Research, Energy		04/11/2003
		PPE-DE QUISTHOUDT-ROWOHL Godelieve	

Key events			
20/10/2003	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
27/01/2004	Vote in committee		Summary
27/01/2004	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0052/2004	
26/02/2004	Debate in Parliament		
26/02/2004	Decision by Parliament	T5-0122/2004	Summary
26/02/2004	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2003/2225(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 134o
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed

Documentation gateway

Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0052/2004	27/01/2004	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T5-0122/2004 OJ C 097 23.04.2004, p. 0023-0193 E	26/02/2004	EP	Summary

European Union policy towards the South Caucasus

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Per GAHRTON (Greens/EFA, S) on EU policy towards the South Caucasus. It was critical of the unambitious strategy which the Union had pursued vis-à-vis this region (a future neighbour of the enlarged EU), to the extent that the three countries in question - Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia - continued to be excluded from the EU's "Wider Europe - New Neighbourhood" initiative. MEPs called for the Union to pursue a more proactive approach to the peace and stabilisation processes in the region and to promoting democratisation and economic reform in South Caucasus. They stressed that the EU could play a constructive role in the region as a civil power, with experience in successfully employing economic incentives linked to political and diplomatic initiatives. The report added that in the coming decade the region would become increasingly important for energy supply to the EU, owing to its oil and gas reserves. MEPs welcomed the fact that Parliament's idea of appointing an EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus had been taken up by the Council, and called for him to be given the necessary resources to carry out his task effectively and visibly. They also wanted the Council to act on Parliament's proposal to develop a Stability Pact for the South Caucasus. The committee made a number of other recommendations to the Council, i.e.: - including the question of the three peace processes in South Caucasus and the future of the region in the development of the EU-Russia partnership. Moreover, Russia should respect its commitments on the reduction and withdrawal of the Russian military forces from the territory of Georgia; - taking full account of the need for the EU to provide further support for the rehabilitation of energy, transport and telecommunication networks and, possibly, to help finance the development of the energy supply system in the region (particularly in Armenia and Georgia); - taking full account of the strategic importance of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline and urging the countries concerned to meet EU environmental impact assessment standards for this project. Moreover, special attention should be devoted to security and anti-terrorism measures when constructing this pipeline; - developing multi-presidency programmes for cooperation on justice and home affairs issues with the South Caucasus states, emphasising the fight against terrorism, organised crime, drug trafficking, small arms trading, kidnapping, and other criminal activities which have destabilising effects; - reminding the three South Caucasus Republics, especially Azerbaijan and Georgia which have concluded reciprocal Bilateral Immunity Agreements with the US, that support for the International Criminal Court is an important element of cooperation with the EU. Lastly, the report urged Turkey to be "fully committed to its candidate status" and to establish good-neighbourly relations with the South Caucasus countries, "with particular regard to the lifting of the trade restrictions and the gradual reopening of the land border with Armenia".?

European Union policy towards the South Caucasus

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Per GAHRTON (Greens/EFA, S) on EU policy towards the South Caucasus. (Please see the document dated 27/01/04.) Parliament recommended giving the South Caucasus region a defined status in the 'Wider Europe - New Neighbourhood' policy, in accordance with the principle of avoiding the creation of new dividing lines in Europe, to stimulate the countries in the region to advance in political and economic reforms, while at the same time confirming the EU's wish to increase its political and conflict resolution roles in the region. Parliament also felt that there should be certain initial minimum requirements for the South Caucasus countries to fulfil, in order to be included in the 'Wider Europe - New Neighbourhood' policies. Furthermore, all the countries in the region were asked not to block efforts to bring the three states closer together by demanding a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as a precondition. The question of the three peace processes in South Caucasus and the future of the region should be included in the development of the EU-Russia partnership to create the necessary momentum to overcome the present deadlock and to engage Russia in a long-term policy of conflict management. The European Parliament rejected the recent statements by Russian President Putin and Foreign Minister Ivanov stating that Russia retains the option to make use of pre-emptive strikes on bordering countries in case of danger. The Russian Federation was urged to respect its commitments taken in 1999 OSCE Istanbul Summit on the reduction and withdrawal of the Russian military forces from the territory of Georgia and to take note that the free consent of the host country is mandatory for the presence of foreign military bases on its territory. Parliament went on to express its concern about the human rights situation and the independence of the media in Azerbaijan, and urged the Azerbaijani government to carry out a full investigation about the events which took place after the presidential elections of 15 October 2003. On the development of a Stability Pact for the South Caucasus, Parliament stated that the pact should include neighbouring states and other important actors in the region and territories with breakaway pretensions should be involved. In the framework of the Pact, it was necessary to promote economic cooperation in the areas of lowering trade barriers, development of energy, transport and communication networks, increased freedom of movement for persons, improved border management, measures against cross-border crime and cooperation on environmental issues. Parliament emphasized the importance of supporting the development and stability of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia and refraining from any involvement in conflicts based on the importance of oil in the region. Finally, Parliament stated the necessity of finding an overall solution to the refugee problem, which affects all of the states in the region. While refugee return should form part of negotiated settlements, refugees and displaced persons should not be exploited as tools in conflicts. Parliament insisted that under no circumstances should the displaced population be used as an argument for political aims and that durable solutions, including integration for those who wish to integrate, should be elaborated and implemented without delay in full co-operation with the international community.?