


Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2003/2230(INI)	Procedure completed
Relations between European Union and Russia		
Subject 6.40.04.02 Relations with Russian Federation		
Geographical area Russian Federation		

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

Key events			
22/10/2003	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
21/01/2004	Vote in committee		Summary
21/01/2004	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0053/2004	
26/02/2004	Debate in Parliament		
26/02/2004	Decision by Parliament	T5-0121/2004	Summary
26/02/2004	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2003/2230(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 134o
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/5/20341

Documentation gateway					
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0053/2004	21/01/2004	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T5-0121/2004 OJ C 098 23.04.2004, p. 0023-0182 E	26/02/2004	EP	Summary

Relations between European Union and Russia

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Bastiaan BELDER (EDD, NL) on relations between the EU and Russia. The report called on the Council to review its strategy and ensure that the partnership with Russia was based to a greater degree on respect for shared values, with no exceptions to this rule. Far from seeking any break with the strategic goals of the EU's current Russia policy, MEPs called for greater consistency in the positions and measures taken by leaders of the Member States, the Council and the Commission. They criticised the fact that "uncoordinated statements by leaders of Member States rendered negotiations with Russia on Kaliningrad transit excessively difficult" and that after the last EU-Russia summit "spectacular statements on Chechnya" were made "which went straight against" well-established EU positions. The report recommended that the European Council should base its revised policy on the following objectives: ensuring good neighbourly relations by appropriate border management and better cross-border cooperation in the fight against crime and illegal migration; promoting human rights, democracy, independent media, the development of civil society, the rule of law and transparency; cooperating in resolving the conflicts in the south Caucasus and encouraging disarmament and non-proliferation; exploiting the potential for increased trade, including in energy products; and supporting efforts to improve public health and other aspects of social development in Russia. MEPs also questioned the EU's role in the Chechen conflict, which had resulted in 200 000 deaths in the last 10 years out of an initial Chechen population of a million inhabitants, as well as tens of thousands of dead amongst the Russian troops. The committee said that the lack of dialogue on Chechnya was "morally and politically indefensible" as well as incompatible with the wish to deepen cooperation on internal and external security. MEPs expressed deep concern and urged the Russian authorities to investigate the disappearances, reports of torture and other crimes and to bring the perpetrators to justice. They also called on Moscow to authorise visits by the UN and to allow humanitarian agencies to work in Chechnya. The Council was asked to encourage a resumption of dialogue between the Moscow authorities and all representatives of Chechen society. Lastly, the committee called on the Council not to accept Russia's refusal to extend the application of the partnership and cooperation agreement to include Estonia and Latvia, and demanded that Russia should ratify without delay the border agreements negotiated with these two countries.?

Relations between European Union and Russia

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Bastiaan BELDER (EDD, NL) on EU-Russia relations. (Please see the document dated 21/01/04). Parliament stated that Chechnya is not only an "internal affair" of Russia's, in that violations of human rights are self-evidently threats to international security, of a kind already felt in some neighbouring countries. Parliament stated that Russia has not undergone a transition of the kind envisaged when the international community, including the EU, formulated its basic response to developments there a decade ago. If instead, contrary to the common values on which the EU-Russia bilateral relationship is to be built, a "managed democracy" is being consolidated, if economic reforms remain relatively slow, at least as long as the extractive industries continue to prosper and if, in practice, pursuit of increased leverage on some neighbours is as important as the search for mutually beneficial co-operative solutions, then the EU must fully take these developments into account in its assessment of its Russian policy. Parliament recommended that the Council and the European Council structure the revised Russian policy around certain prescribed objectives. These include promoting human rights, democracy, independent media, civil society development, religious freedom, the rule of law and transparency, with special focus on urgently seeking an improvement in the situation in Chechnya. The Council should revive and further develop the two-track approach according to which the EU should actively pursue a change in Russia's policy in relation to Chechnya, while at the same time continuing cooperation with Russia in other areas. The launch of an inclusive, genuine peace and reconciliation process remains an urgent necessity. Parliament felt it important to prepare detailed proposals for alternative approaches to the conflict, taking into account important aspects of the conflict such as its deep historic roots, the lack of interest in ending it on the part of actors who under the current semi-anarchic conditions in the republic can conduct lucrative unofficial and criminal economic activities there, the sociological characteristics of Chechen society, the need for massive reconstruction efforts and the possibility of the EU contributing thereto if requirements for the aid to be effective can be met, the terrorism aspect and, indeed, legitimate Russian security concerns. Parliament also wanted co-operation in addressing the 'frozen conflicts' in the south Caucasus, contributing significantly to the solution of the Transnistria issue and controlling the international arms trade and promoting disarmament and non-proliferation. With regard to human rights, Parliament stated that it is aware that the privatisation process in the 1990s was carried out in a chaotic economic climate which gave rise to instances of dishonest and corrupt conduct. There are several possible ways of dealing with those actions that, despite the ill developed legal framework at the time, can be identified as illegal. It stressed, however, that respect for the principles of equality before the law and non-interference by political authorities in judicial proceedings, as well as respect for the rights of defendants, are fundamental for democratic states upholding the rule of law. These principles enshrined in the 1993 Russian Constitution form an integral part of the international obligations which the Russian Federation freely assumed when it ratified the European Convention on Human Rights in 1996, and it must therefore respect its obligations not only in word but also in deed.?