

Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2008/2104(INI)	Procedure completed
Relations between the EU and Russia		
Subject 6.20.03 Bilateral economic and trade agreements and relations 6.40.04.02 Relations with Russian Federation		
Geographical area Russian Federation		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	AFET Foreign Affairs		27/11/2007
		ALDE ONYSZKIEWICZ Janusz	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	INTA International Trade		09/10/2006
		UEN MALDEIKIS Eugenijus	
	ITRE Industry, Research and Energy		22/05/2008
		PPE-DE GUTIÉRREZ-CORTINES Cristina	
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	General Affairs	2869	26/05/2008
	General Affairs	2864	29/04/2008
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	External Relations	FERRERO-WALDNER Benita	

Key events			
01/10/2007	Non-legislative basic document published	B6-0373/2007	Summary
24/04/2008	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
29/04/2008	Debate in Council	2864	
09/03/2009	Vote in committee		Summary
16/03/2009	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0140/2009	
01/04/2009	Debate in Parliament		

			
02/04/2009	Decision by Parliament	T6-0215/2009	Summary
02/04/2009	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2008/2104(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 134o-p3
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/6/61866

Documentation gateway					
Non-legislative basic document		B6-0373/2007	01/10/2007	EP	Summary
Committee opinion	INTA	PE407.769	17/07/2008	EP	
Committee draft report		PE405.754	03/02/2009	EP	
Committee opinion	ITRE	PE409.362	12/02/2009	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE409.741	26/02/2009	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0140/2009	16/03/2009	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0215/2009	02/04/2009	EP	Summary

Relations between the EU and Russia

PURPOSE: to propose a European Parliament recommendation to the Council on relations between the European Union and Russia.

CONTENT: pursuant to Rule 114(1) of the Rules of Procedure, Janusz ONYSZKIEWICZ (ALDE, PL) proposed, on behalf of the ALDE Group, a draft recommendation on relations between the European Union and Russia.

The draft recommendation highlights the huge importance of Russia to European and world stability and prosperity and underlines the EU's commitment to achieving a strategic partnership with Russia based on democratic values. There is, however, an increased need for a firm, robust and comprehensive EU policy on Russia.

In this context, the Parliament addresses the following recommendations to the Council:

- to continue to work on a solution to the trade issues that are currently blocking the start of the negotiations on a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and Russia;
- to devise a clear strategy on how to increase Russia's implementation of democratic rules and respect for fundamental values ? the common values that must form the base for future relations;
- to continue to work for Russia's accession to the WTO and its acceptance of modern investment and business rules as guiding principles in a truly independent private sector;
- to continue to work on the prospect of Russia's adherence to the Energy Charter and the positive outcome of the ratification process.

Relations between the EU and Russia

The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted the own-initiative report drawn up by Janusz ONYSZKIEWICZ (ALDE, PL) on a proposal for a European Parliament recommendation to the Council on the new EU-Russia agreement.

Recalling that EU relations with Russia are of crucial importance for the purposes of pragmatic cooperation and that Russia is the third largest trading partner of the EU and the fourth largest trading partner of the Eurozone and an essential energy supplier to the EU, MEPs address the following recommendations to the Council and the Commission and ask

them to take them into account when pursuing the negotiations:

Human Rights: MEPs:

- continue to insist on a broad, wide-ranging and legally binding agreement based on a shared commitment to human rights;
- insist that the EU's relationship with Russia must be based on respect for the rule of international law and all binding agreements and treaties to which Russia and EU Member States adhere, including the UN Charter, the European Convention on Human Rights and the Energy Charter Treaty, as well as the rules and commitments incumbent on members of the OSCE and Council of Europe;
- proposes putting in place a consultation mechanism, under the responsibility of the High Representative, which would enable Member States to consult each other sufficiently in advance on every bilateral issue ? whether an agreement or a dispute ? with Russia which could have repercussions on other Member States and the EU as a whole;
- insist on raising with the Russian Government concerns about the human rights situation and the shrinking space for Russia's civil society and to take prompt and effective steps to foster a favourable working climate for human rights organisations and independent charitable organisations engaged in the promotion of cultural links between Russia and EU Member States;
- call on the Russian Government to fully respect media freedom and guarantee the enjoyment by independent media of political and economic conditions;
- call for the revision of the EU-Russia human rights consultation to make it more efficient;
- appeal to the authorities of the Russian Federation to guarantee the existence and sustainable development of the traditional lifestyle, culture and language of indigenous people living within its borders.

Membership of the WTO: MEPs:

- continue to maintain support for Russia's accession to the WTO and support the further opening-up of the Russian economy and to create a free-trade zone between the EU and Russia, which continues to be a long-term objective;
- call for further improvements to be made in legislation and law enforcement as regards the protection of intellectual, industrial and commercial property rights in order to increase competitiveness and make the investment climate attractive;
- call for new measures to combat effectively counterfeiting and piracy.

Energy and environment: MEPs:

- insist that the Energy Charter Treaty, as an existing treaty which is legally binding on Russia and all EU Member States, should be the basis for relations in the field of energy;
- call for the establishment of a legal framework governing the transit of energy supplies and insist on increased transparency, reciprocity and security of investment and for a consequent enhancement of security of energy supply;
- underline the need to establish mechanisms for a transparent rules-based system and dispute settlement mechanism in the field of energy.

Political dialogue and Georgia issue:MEPs call for:

- a clear code of conduct governing relations between the EU, Russia and the countries of the shared neighbourhood, including provisions relating to respect for the sovereign independence of all European states, a commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes and a determination to resolve frozen conflicts;
- improvements on the existing political dialogue so as to encourage discussion of ?hard security issues?, which are often at the core of the disagreements between the EU and Russia but which indubitably affect European and global security;
- a positive contribution to finding a sustainable political solution for the future of Kosovo and for the further enhancement of the stability of the Western Balkans;
- a real commitment from the Russian authorities to resolve in a constructive and peaceful manner, together with Georgia and the EU, the ?modalities of security and stability in Abkhazia and South Ossetia? (MEPs urge the Russian Government to ensure that EU monitors are granted full access to all areas affected by the conflict, in compliance with the mandate of the EU Monitoring Mission).

Visa policy: MEPs:

- insist that the goal of visa-free travel vis-à-vis Russia be pursued in the light of Council Regulation (EC) No 539/2001;
- insist on a clear commitment from the Russian authorities to reduce bureaucratic obstacles applied in a non-reciprocal manner with respect to all travellers, such as the need to have an invitation and to register upon arrival;
- insist that visa facilitation for students, researchers and businessmen should be a priority in order to promote people-to-people contacts;
- urgently address the Kaliningrad transit and visa problem, possibly by providing for the whole of the Kaliningrad Oblast to be covered by the local border traffic regime.

Market liberalisation: MEPs call for:

- the liberalisation of markets and the reciprocity of investment rights between the partners, as well as the guarantee the property rights of foreign investors;
- the compatibility of Russian legislation with Russia's current and future obligations under the WTO;
- the phasing out of Siberian overflight payments requested by Russia and the signature of the agreement reached on this issue at the summit in Samara;
- free passage through the Pilawa strait to allow access for EU shipping to the passage to Asia along the Northern Russian territory.

Lastly, MEPs ask the Council and the Commission to keep Parliament regularly and fully informed of the progress of the negotiations.

Relations between the EU and Russia

The European Parliament adopted by 416 votes to 80, with 147 abstentions, a resolution comprising a series of recommendations to the Council on the new EU-Russia agreement.

Recalling that EU relations with Russia are of crucial importance for the purposes of pragmatic cooperation and that Russia is the third largest trading partner of the EU and the fourth largest trading partner of the Eurozone and an essential energy supplier to the EU, the Parliament addresses the following recommendations to the Council in the context of the current negotiations on a new cooperation agreement.

Human Rights: Parliament calls for the following:

- that the EU continues to insist on a broad, wide-ranging and legally binding agreement based on a shared commitment to human rights;
- that Russia respects international law and all binding agreements and treaties to which it adheres, including the UN Charter, the European Convention on Human Rights and the Energy Charter Treaty;
- that the EU insists on the fact that a close partnership, enhanced cooperation and good neighbourly relations between it and Russia, as well as the new policy of the US administration towards Russia, can create a stable foundation and a precondition for stability, security and prosperity in Europe and worldwide (the plenary welcomes the declarations of the US administration concerning the great potential for cooperation with Russia);
- the putting in place a consultation mechanism, under the responsibility of the High Representative, which would enable Member States to consult each other sufficiently in advance on every bilateral issue ? whether an agreement or a dispute ? with Russia which could have repercussions on other Member States and the EU as a whole;
- that the EU insists on raising with the Russian Government concerns about the human rights situation and the shrinking space for Russia's civil society and to take prompt and effective steps to foster a favourable working climate for NGOs;
- that the Russian Government fully respect media freedom and guarantee the enjoyment by independent media of political and economic conditions;
- that the EU recalls President Medvedev's public commitment to strengthening the rule of law in Russia and raises its concerns over the independence of Russia's judiciary and legal system;
- the revision of the six-monthly EU-Russia human rights consultation to make it more efficient and to also include minority rights;
- that the Russian Federation guarantee the existence and sustainable development of the traditional lifestyle, culture and language of indigenous people living within its borders.

External policy: the Parliament points out:

- that the negotiations on a new agreement aimed at enhancing cooperation between the EU and the Russian Federation should in no way legitimise the current status quo in Georgia, and that the obligation for Russia to implement fully the agreements signed on 12 August and 8 September 2008 with regard to the conflict in South Ossetia and Abkhazia remains valid, since its compliance with those agreements should be a sine qua non for the successful completion of the talks, which should include a renunciation by all parties of the use of force against neighbouring countries;
- its strong concern at the situation in Chechnya, where Kadirov's regime has failed to bring peace and reconciliation and, on the contrary, has imposed fear and oppression that eroded civil society and suppressed any open and democratic voice, and call for a real political settlement.

Membership of the WTO: Parliament wants:

- the EU to continue to maintain support for Russia's accession to the WTO and support the further opening-up of the Russian economy and to create a free-trade zone between the EU and Russia, which continues to be a long-term objective;
- further improvements to be made in legislation and law enforcement as regards the protection of intellectual, industrial and commercial property rights in order to increase competitiveness and make the investment climate attractive;
- new measures to combat effectively counterfeiting and piracy.

Energy and environment: the Parliament asks:

- that the Energy Charter (signed but not ratified by Moscow) and its protocol on transit (not signed by Russia) serve as a basis for relations on the energy field with the Union and for their integration in the new agreement (this protocol would prohibit any interruption or reduction in energy flow in the event of dispute regarding transit means);
- Russia to establish a legal framework governing the transit of energy supplies to the Union, based on the framework already in place in the Energy Charter;
- environmental impact assessments to be carried out on all energy infrastructure projects;
- Russia to demonstrate greater transparency and reciprocity in the energy crisis which faces the Union and for it to enhance significantly the security of energy supply (in particular, MEPs call for the establishment of a transparent rules-based system and dispute-settlement mechanism).

Political dialogue: The Parliament calls for:

- a clear code of conduct governing relations between the EU, Russia and the countries of the shared neighbourhood, including provisions relating to respect for the sovereign independence of all European states, a commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes and a determination to resolve frozen conflicts;
- improvements on the existing political dialogue so as to encourage discussion of ?hard security issues?, which are often at the core of the disagreements between the EU and Russia but which indubitably affect European and global security;
- a positive contribution to finding a sustainable political solution for the future of Kosovo and the stability of the Western Balkans;
- a real commitment from the Russian authorities to resolve in a constructive and peaceful manner, together with Georgia and the EU, the ?modalities of security and stability in Abkhazia and South Ossetia? (MEPs urge the Russian Government to ensure that EU monitors are granted full access to all areas affected by the conflict, in compliance with the mandate of the EU Monitoring Mission).

Visa policy: the Parliament:

- insists that the goal of visa-free travel vis-à-vis Russia be pursued in the light of Council Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 as well as that of visa facilitation to encourage interpersonal contacts, but taking into account reciprocal measures on the part of the Russian authorities;
- insists on a clear commitment from the Russian authorities to reduce bureaucratic obstacles applied in a non-reciprocal manner with respect to all travellers, such as the need to have an invitation and to register upon arrival;

- calls for the Kaliningrad transit and visa problem to be urgently addressed.

Market liberalisation: Parliament calls for:

- the liberalisation of markets and the reciprocity of investment rights between the partners, as well as the guarantee the property rights of foreign investors;
- the compatibility of Russian legislation with Russia's current and future obligations under the WTO;
- the phasing out of Siberian overflight payments requested by Russia and the signature of the agreement reached on this issue at the summit in Samara;
- free passage through the Pilawa strait to allow access for EU shipping to the passage to Asia along the Northern Russian territory.

Lastly, Parliament calls on the Council and the Commission to keep Parliament regularly and fully informed of the progress of the negotiations.