



## Human rights and Russian actions in Georgia worry MEPs otherwise supportive of Partnership and Cooperation Agreement

The deteriorating human rights conditions in Russia and Moscow's actions in Abkhazia and South Ossetia were the top worries of MEPs discussing the upcoming EU-Russia summit. A resolution, adopted with 488 votes in favour, 34 against and 30 abstentions, stresses these concerns, while expressing the House's satisfaction that the negotiations on a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) can now begin.

The Parliament expresses "its satisfaction that it has finally been possible to overcome the obstacles to reaching an agreement on the mandate for negotiations with the Russian Federation on a new Partnership Agreement." The start of negotiations had been held up by a Polish veto related to a Russian ban on meat exports, and more recently by Lithuania, which was concerned about Russian energy policy and its actions in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

### Frozen conflicts, frosty US relations

The resolution repeats Lithuanian worries, voicing the Parliament's "serious concern over Russia's decision to establish enhanced links with the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and reiterates its full support for the territorial integrity of Georgia." The House also asks the Council to raise the issue of "the shooting-down of a Georgian drone by a Russian aircraft, as well as the recent substantial increase in the number of Russian troops in Abkhazia," during the upcoming summit.

In an indirect allusion to the question of US plans to establish an anti-missile shield in Europe, the House also "appeals to the Governments of Russia and the United States to intensify the discussions on defence and security issues directly or indirectly involving the European Union Member States," and urges them "to refrain from any steps and decisions which might be considered a threat to peace and stability on the European continent."

### Human rights and rule of law within Russia

MEPs express their "deep concern over the increasingly frequent attacks on ethnic, racial and religious minorities in Russia," as well as about "the deteriorating situation of human rights defenders and difficulties faced by NGOs active in the promotion of human rights and in environmental protection and ecological issues with regard to their registration and in carrying out their activities." They are also "deeply concerned about the newly amended legislation on extremism, which could have an effect on the free

# Press release

flow of information and could lead the Russian authorities to further restrict the right to free expression of independent journalists and political opponents."

With special regard to foreign companies and their possibilities for doing business in Russia, the Parliament "is concerned about the lack of predictability in the application of rules by authorities" there. On energy policy, the House repeats that "the principles of interdependence and transparency should be the basis" of EU-Russia cooperation, and stresses--in this area, as all others--"the importance of unity among the EU Member States in their relations with Russia."

## Contact :

### **Lorinc REDEI**

E-mail: [foreign-press@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:foreign-press@europarl.europa.eu)

BXL: (32-2) 28 32379

STR: (33-3) 881 74912

PORT: (32) 498.983.283

### **Richard FREEDMAN**

E-mail: [press-EN@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:press-EN@europarl.europa.eu)

BXL: (32-2) 28 41448

STR: (33-3) 881 73785

PORT: (+32) 498 98 32 39