

EU-RUSSIA PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION COMMITTEE

14th Meeting

19-20 September 2011

WARSAW

Co-Chairs: Mr. Knut FLECKENSTEIN and Mr. Andrey KLIMOV

Final Statement and Recommendations

Under the co-chairmanship of Mr. Knut FLECKENSTEIN (European Parliament) and Mr. Andrey KLIMOV (State Duma, Russian Federation), the 14th meeting of the EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee was held in Warsaw on 19-20 September 2011.

The Committee exchanged views with:

- Mr. Vladimir CHIZHOV, Permanent Representative of Russia to the European Union
- Mr. Alexander ALEXEEV, Ambassador of Russia to Poland
- Mr. Siyabshakh SHAPIEV, Member of the Central Election Commission of Russia
- Mr. Nikolay TSUKANOV, Governor of Kaliningrad Region
- Mr. Jerzy POMIANOWSKI, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland on behalf of the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
- Mr. Andrzej HALICKI, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Polish Sejm on behalf of Mr Grzegorz SCHETYNA, Marshall of the Polish Sejm
- Ms Beata MARTIN-ROZUMILOWICZ, Head of ODIHR's Election Department
- Mr. Michael PULCH, Head of Russia Division, European External Action Service

The discussions focused on:

- the follow-up of the PCC Working Group meetings held in Brussels, Astrakhan and Sochi in 2011;
- parliamentary election standards in the EU and in Russia;
- the Kaliningrad region in the context of free movement of people.

The Parliamentary Cooperation Committee (PCC)

- Whereas the EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee, based on the EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation agreement of 1994, is the most important frame for regular and direct parliamentary dialogue between the Russian Federation and the European Union,
- Whereas, during the regular meetings held in almost fifteen years, the Committee has addressed a large spectrum of issues in an open and constructive manner and has thus significantly contributed to strengthening confidence between the two sides,

- Whereas the Partnership for Modernisation, launched at the EU-Russia Summit in Rostov-on-Don on 1 June 2010, marks a significant progress in the EU-Russia relations,
- Whereas this Parliamentary Cooperation Committee meeting is the last one during the present legislature of the Russian Duma (2007-2011),

1. Welcomes the outcome of the discussions held in 2011 in the framework offered by the three EU-Russia PCC Working Groups meetings in Brussels (21-22.03), Astrakhan (27-28.04) and Sochi (17-18.05) on EU-Russia regional cooperation and relations with neighbouring countries, science and research cooperation, rural development, environmental protection, sport, sport infrastructure and youth policies;

EU-Russia regional cooperation and relations with neighbouring countries

2. Hopes for better cooperation between the European Union and the Russian Federation in various regions of interest, especially in the Middle East and Northern Africa; underlines the importance of respecting fundamental rules of international law, the protection of human rights, including national minorities, and the standards related to democracy and the rule of law;
3. Calls for further development of cooperation in the Black Sea region through strengthening dialogue and improving coordination among the countries of the region and between the European Union and the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, as the most comprehensive and representative organisation in the region;
4. Underlines the importance of continuing dialogue with Belarus, in order to support Belarus in taking its due place in a democratic, prosperous and free Europe, under the rule of law;
5. Notes the need for additional efforts in the Transnistrian conflict settlement, to create conditions for a constructive dialogue and for continuing the work following the Moscow 5+2 consultations on 21 June 2011; supports the negotiation of a long-term mutually acceptable political solution in a sustainable Transnistrian settlement process , with full respect of international law;
6. Calls for joint efforts and strengthened cooperation on Libya with a view to launching and carrying out a credible reconstruction strategy, supporting the reconciliation process among all the components of the Libyan society and facilitating the transition of the country towards democracy; stresses the need for the UN and its Security Council to act as coordinators for all efforts by the international community in assisting the post-crisis reconstruction of Libya;

7. Welcomes the observer status of the Russian Federation in the Information- and Coordination Group of the Eastern Partnership.

Science and research cooperation, rural development and environmental protection

8. Praises the good cooperation between the EU and the Russian Federation in the field of science and research; takes note, as well, of the EU Member States activities with the Russian Federation in this respect;
9. Welcomes the good initiatives, which the PCC in some cases could directly witness, of environmentally sound investments in Russia, especially in some difficult sectors like oil and gas refining; reaffirms the necessity to further extend such initiatives in the field of environment protection;
10. Underlines the importance of directing or re-directing investment in various regions of both the EU and the Russian Federation, in view of creating a more balanced approach leading to harmonious regional development;
11. Stresses the importance of a modern and sustainable agriculture and rural development; calls on the EU and on the Russian Federation to share their best policies in that respect.

Sports, sports infrastructure and youth policies

12. Underlines the importance of sport in the relations between the EU and Russia and encourages both to improve their cooperation in this field, as far as it is not covered by the current cooperation agreements yet;
13. Recognizes the role of sport in promoting positive values among the young generation, fostering competitiveness and aiming at better integration of youth, while improving health conditions, which are all factors beneficial for the whole society;
14. Takes note of the important efforts of the Russian Federation in preparation of the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi and the 2018 World Football Championship;
15. Stresses the importance of sound and forward-looking youth policies, as a common responsibility towards the future generations; these policies should aim at promoting tolerance, social inclusion and cooperation, in a way which would lead to further development of the civil society in both entities;
16. Reiterates its proposal addressed to the EU institutions and the Member States and relevant authorities of the Russian Federation to establish a visa-free regime, as a

preliminary step, for the holders of passports of both the EU and Russia, born in 1989 and later.

Kaliningrad region in the context of free movement of people

17. Welcomes the proposal of the European Commission of 29 July 2011 to amend Regulation 1931/2006 on local border traffic facilitating border crossing for citizens living in the entire Kaliningrad region of the Russian Federation to travel without visas to neighbouring regions of Poland, taking into account the particular geographical location of the region and the special rules that apply here; welcomes that the entire Kaliningrad region, as well as a specific border area on the Polish side will be considered as border zone; urges the relevant EU institutions to endorse this proposal as soon as possible; calls on all EU Member states to support this proposal actively, as it will facilitate people-to-people contacts and enhance economic cooperation on both sides of the border, without affecting security;
18. Urges to accelerate work towards future visa liberalisation procedures up to full abolishment of visa requirements for mutual travels of Russian and EU citizens, taking into account the need for further developing the EU-Russia political cooperation, economic, social and cultural relations and facilitating people-to-people contacts.

Parliamentary election standards in the EU and in Russia

19. Stresses the fact that the conduct of democratic, free and fair elections is one of the key elements of a democratic state;
20. Underlines the importance of monitoring elections, in accordance with the commitments agreed within international organisations, in particular the Council of Europe and the OSCE, and respective national legislation;
21. Underlines the need to step up the efforts deployed to increase the interest in politics among voters, with the aim to assure a high level of their participation in parliamentary elections;
22. Stresses the importance of political pluralism for the functioning of modern states, reflecting complexity and diversification of modern societies;
23. Takes note of the expertise of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in assisting the OSCE participating States in fulfilling their election-related commitments;
24. Affirms that any future review of the OSCE commitments, and consequently, of the ODIHR mandate and methodology, are joint exercises of all OSCE participating States; underlines the need for the ODIHR to further strengthen its election-

observation methodology and, to that end, to devise, in an open and constructive spirit, basic principles and rules of international election observation to be agreed upon by all the OSCE participating States.