

EU-RUSSIA PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION COMMITTEE

13th Meeting

15-16 December 2010

STRASBOURG

Co-Chairs: Mr Knut FLECKENSTEIN and 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 13th meeting of the EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee was held in Strasbourg on 15-16 December 2010. The Committee exchanged views with Ambassador Vladimir CHIZHOV, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the EU and Ms Hilde HARDEMAN, Head of Unit "Relations with Russia and Northern Dimension Policy", European Commission.

The Committee also took the opportunity of the presence of Mr Vladimir LUKIN, Ombudsman of the Russian Federation, to raise human rights issues.

The discussions focused on:

- The Follow-up of PCC Working Group meetings held in Moscow, Perm and Brussels in 2010;
- The EU-Russia initiative "Partnership for Modernisation" and the results of the EU-Russia Summit of 7 December 2010;
- Parliamentary youth exchanges.

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 meaningful frame of regular and direct parliamentary contacts between the Russian Federation and the European Union,

- Whereas for more than ten years of regular meetings the Committee has addressed a large spectrum of issues in an open and constructive manner and thus strengthened confidence between the two sides.

1. Welcomes the outcome of discussions during three EU-Russia PCC Working Groups held in Moscow (1.04), Perm (27-28.05) and Brussels (29-30.09) this year, on intercultural dialogue, cooperation in education and science, human rights and civil society and security issues;

Scientific, educational and cultural cooperation

2. Whereas the EU member states and the Russian Federation are integral parts of Europe, believes that culture and science need to be considered in their widest sense, as both fostering and enriching pan-European values;
3. Expresses satisfaction that the scientific cooperation between the Russian Federation and the European Union is one of the most successful examples of mutually beneficial cooperation; expects that further improvement of this cooperation will follow in the future;
4. Underlines that both sides have great potential of further intensification in science, innovation, education and culture sectors interaction, ensuring higher efficiency and feedback for the good of both sides;
5. Calls on respective authorities on both sides to consider the possibility of launching a Cultural Partnership as a common platform for promoting European cultural integration in the broadest sense;

Human rights, civil society and visa

6. Recognizes the importance of developing strategic partnership between the EU and Russia and confirms that it should be based on our common values – democracy, human rights, fundamental freedoms and rule of law, as well as on mutually beneficial cooperation and a shared vision of a stable and prosperous Europe;
7. Welcomes the constructive and fruitful meetings with representatives of NGOs, national minorities and state institutions held, on the themes of human rights and civil society, during the Working Group visit to the Perm Region in May 2010; points out that the situation of civil society both within the EU and in the Russian Federation differs from region to region;
8. Highlights that the visit to the Perm-36 Gulag camp during the Working Group session was an occasion to better understand and learn from Europe's common history and totalitarian past;
9. Reiterates that the freedom of assembly and media as laid down in the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms are essential preconditions for a democratic and active society; is concerned by attacks on human rights defenders, lawyers and journalists and calls for complete and independent investigation of these cases; welcomes Russian authorities' decision to toughen punishment for crimes against journalists;

10. Expresses concern regarding tendencies of nationalist rhetoric and totalitarian cults, discrimination and harassment against certain ethnic and religious minorities in the EU and the Russian Federation, calls in this respect on the governments to do their utmost in improving the situation within their country and to fight all forms of discrimination;
11. Reiterates its aim to continue and intensify cooperation in the future in order to come to a united, prosperous and democratic Europe without dividing lines, where the four EU-Russia Common Spaces and principles of the “four freedoms” – movement of goods, services, capital and people – will have been effectively implemented, thus facilitating comprehensive cooperation and people-to-people contacts in multilateral projects aiming at improving human rights protection;
12. Underlines the importance of people-to-people contacts and calls on both the EU Member States and on the Russian Federation to fully implement the visa facilitation and readmission agreements between Russia and the EC and to remain ambitious as regards further steps towards full and mutual visa liberalisation, up to a visa-free regime including abolition of all kind of cumbersome registration requirements on both sides;

Security issues

13. Welcomes the outcome of the third Working Group held in Brussels on the 29-30 September focused on security-related issues, such as the role of NATO, EU and Russia in maintaining security, reform of the OSCE and President Medvedev’s plan on the new European Security Treaty;
14. Welcomes the outcomes of the Russia-NATO Council meeting at the level of Heads of State and Government, in Lisbon on 20 November, which affirmed that they have embarked on a new stage of cooperation towards a true strategic partnership, that the Council is a forum for political dialogue at all times and on all issues and decided to pursue missile defence cooperation, amongst others;
15. Takes note of the continuously evolving needs and challenges, which render evident the interest of adapting the capacities or transforming existing international institutions dedicated to the maintaining of security;
16. Stresses the particular interest of the EU and of Russia to elaborate responses to new threats to comprehensive, co-operative, equal and indivisible security based on full adherence to common OSCE norms, principles and commitments across all three dimensions; stresses the

interest in cooperating on conflict prevention and solving frozen conflicts based on common criteria across the whole Europe;

17. Underlines the important role of the OSCE as a multi-lateral and widely respected institution; notes in this respect the positive contribution represented by the proposal of the President of the Russian Federation for a new European security architecture; stresses that both soft and hard security are integral parts of cooperation; encourages all the stakeholders involved to explore possibilities of strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE with a view to transform it into a fully-fledged international organisation. Recognises comprehensive indivisible security as the fundamental principle of maintaining security in Europe;
18. Recognizes the need for trust-building and an active political dialogue between the EU and Russia on these issues and welcomes any constructive contribution to global security purposes; recognizes in particular the added value of the EU-Russia inter-parliamentary dialogue in this respect;

Partnership for Modernisation

19. Confirms that Russia and the EU have a common interest in enhancing bilateral trade and investment opportunities and in facilitating and liberalising trade in the global economy as well as strengthening and developing competition, including Russia's early WTO accession;
20. Underlines that the Partnership for Modernisation will serve as a flexible framework for promoting economic reform, enhancing growth and raising competitiveness, and will extend cooperation in the framework of the four EU-Russia Common Spaces, complementing partnerships between EU Member States and Russia;
21. Recognizes that sectoral dialogues will be essential implementation instruments for the Partnership for Modernisation;
22. Welcomes the presentation of the "Work plan for activities within the EU-Russia Partnership for Modernisation", encourages implementation of agreed activities within the framework of the Partnership for Modernisation and underlines the importance of monitoring it;
23. Calls on the Russian Federation and the European Union to actively pursue the negotiations on the New Agreement that should bring closer together our peoples and further promote comprehensive strategic partnership;

Youth exchange

24. Recognises the positive role youth could play in the local, regional and global processes especially if involved in public decision-making processes;
25. Urges closer cooperation on youth issues between the EU and Russia and stresses the need for more integrated cooperation with and among national parliaments aiming at further improving mutual relations in the upcoming decades; stresses the important role of the European Studies Institute in Moscow as a successful example of a mutually beneficial cooperation in the area of education as well as the role of Tempus, Erasmus Mundus and Leonardo da Vinci programmes in the development of European education and training policies in cooperation with the Russian Federation;
26. Calls for coherent strategies both in Russia as well as in the EU for youth mobility, cultural and educational development, encourages, therefore, synergies between culture, sports, education, media, multilingualism and youth Russian and EU programmes;
27. Tasks the two Co-Chairmen to identify possibilities of creating a forum for young EU and Russian parliamentarians from the regional, including rural areas, and national levels (including the European Parliament) who would meet once a year to discuss issues of mutual interest, including with the support of universities. The PCC Co-Chairmen should, as political supporters of the initiative, also actively look for possible financial sources.