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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 110(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Kazakhstan (2012/2553(RSP))

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on behalf of the PPE Group

European Parliament resolution on the situation in Kazakhstan (2012/2553(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Kazakhstan and Central Asia, including its resolution on the state of implementation of the EU Strategy for Central Asia¹ and its resolution on the case of Yevgeni Zhotis in Kazakhstan²,
 - having regards to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with Kazakhstan and the negotiations for a new PCA,
 - having regard to EU Strategy for a new Partnership with Central Asia, adopted by the European Council on 21-22 June 2007 and its progress reports of 24 June 2008 and 28 June 2010,
 - having regards to the Statement of VP/HR Ashton of 17 December 2011 on the events in the Zhanaozen district of Kazakhstan, of 17 January on the parliamentary elections in Kazakhstan, of,
 - having regards to the statement of the UN Committee on Human Rights of 17 December 2011,
 - having regards to the OSCE/ODIHR, OSCE PA and PACE joint preliminary election observation report of 16 January 2012 on the legislative elections that took place on 15 January 2012,
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas relations between the EU and Kazakhstan have been growing in the past years and whereas Kazakhstan plays a crucial role for the socio-economic development of Central Asia and the stability and security of the region;
- B. whereas on 17 February 2012 the President of Kazakhstan signed several laws aiming at improving the legal basis for labour relations, worker's rights and social dialogue and to strengthen the independence of the judiciary; whereas further and continuous efforts also in terms of enforcement of existing laws are needed to ensure further democratisation, the respect of human rights and the strengthening of the rule of law;
- C. whereas the strike of oil workers in the Zhanaozen region and other regions of Kazakhstan has been ongoing since spring 2011; whereas violent clashes occurred on 16 December 2011 in Zhanaozen and whereas authorities have announced an international investigation into the events; whereas regional authorities have pledged to grant financial support to the families of victims who died in the events;

¹ P7_TA(2011)0588

² P7_TA(2009)0023

- D. whereas since December 2011 opposition activities and media freedom do not seem to be ensured and whereas cases of arrests of opposition members and journalists are reported in the Zhanaozen region;
- E. whereas regarding the parliamentary elections on 15 January the OSCE/ODIHR noted a number of shortcomings relating to the conduct of the elections and stated that the elections did not comply with international election standards;
- F. whereas Kazakhstan as a member of the OSCE, of which it held the chairmanship in 2010, committed itself to respect and to implement the fundamental principles of this organisation;
- G) whereas Evgeny Zhovtis, director of the Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law, and ‘Vremya’ journalist Tokhniyaz Kuchukov were granted an amnesty by a court decision on 2 February 2012 after having been sentenced to four years in a labour camp in September 2009;
1. Stresses the importance of the relations between the EU and Kazakhstan and the strengthening of political and economic cooperation, including strategic areas such as environment, energy, trade and transport in addition to the fight against terrorism, organised crime and drug trafficking; underlines that the last year was marked by increased cooperation, frequent high level meetings and the start of the negotiations for a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement;
 2. Encourages Kazakhstan to maintain its self-commitment to further reforms in order to build up an open and democratic society including an independent civil society and opposition, respectful of fundamental rights and the rule of law; stresses that the progress of the negotiations on the new agreement will also depend on the progress of political reforms in Kazakhstan;
 3. Takes note of the roadmap towards Kazakhstan's WTO accession which will help to create a more level playing field for business communities on both sides, will facilitate and liberalise trade and is a sign for cooperation and openness; stresses that with accession, Kazakhstan has the obligation to fulfil all WTO rules including the renouncement of protectionist measures;
 4. Takes note of the preliminary election observation report of OSCE/ODIHR, OSCE PA and PACE that the parliamentary elections of 15 January were technically well administered, did however not meet key democratic principles as a result of blocking of parties from standing and deregistering of candidates, convergence of state and governing party, lack of transparency during the counting and cases of electoral fraud;
 5. Welcomes the legal changes in the last months aimed at introducing more parties into the parliament; welcomes that after the legislative election, three parties are represented in the new Parliament which is an important step on the path to a more pluralistic democratic political culture in Kazakhstan; encourages Kazakh authorities to accomplish further reforms needed to achieve genuinely pluralistic elections and to support the functioning of

the independent media and activities of NGOs;

6. Calls on the Kazakh authorities to address the OSCE/ODHIR findings as a matter of priority in order to allow the country's opposition to play its rightful role in a democratic society and to take all necessary steps to comply with international election standards; calls on the EEAS to support Kazakhstan in tackling these issues;
7. Expresses deep concern and condolences regarding the events that took place on 16 December 2011 in the Zhanaozen district of Kazakhstan where 16 people died and 110 others were injured; welcomes the establishment of a government commission to investigate into the events; calls on Kazakh authorities to follow through their announcement to conduct objective and transparent investigations in order to bring about reliable information of the events, to bring justice to those found responsible of abuse of office and to allow for international monitoring of the investigations; calls for unfettered access to be granted to international organisations and local civil society organisations to the region;
8. Calls on the Kazakh authorities and involved companies to find a peaceful, fair and sustainable solution to the problems faced by striking oil workers through social dialogue; notes that in some regions the strikers have found a solution and ended the strike; takes note of the announcement of the Zhanaozen authorities to grant comprehensive measure to support reconstruction and long-term development of the region;
9. Expresses its indignation regarding the incarceration of opposition leaders and journalists since January 2012 including Aizhangul Amirova, Igor Vinyavskiy and Vladimir Kozlov, co-leader of the National Front; calls on Kazakh authorities to live up to the international commitments they have signed up to including those of the OSCE guaranteeing freedom of expression, of assembly and association; stresses the EU's commitment to support Kazakhstan in this work e.g. through technical assistance by the EEAS;
10. Highlights the participation of official representatives of Kazakhstan in open and constructive meetings with Members of the European Parliament with the participation of the civil society and NGOs since January 2012 in the European Parliament where they were open to an international investigations into the events and promised information regarding the arrests of the last months; expects that the announcements made will be followed up by concrete actions;
11. Expresses concern regarding the new legislation on national security that was signed by the President of Kazakhstan at the beginning of January which allows repercussions against persons considered to harm the country's image on the international stage; calls on the Kazakh authorities to take the necessary steps for a better respect of fundamental principles and to ensure free exercise of activity for media, opposition movements and civil society organisations;
12. Underlines the importance of human rights dialogues between the EU and Kazakh authorities where all issues can be openly addressed; calls for the strengthening of the dialogues in order to make them more effective and result-oriented and to allow the involvement of civil society actors;

13. Calls on the EU and in particular the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to closely monitor the developments, to raise concerns with the Kazakh authorities, to offer assistance and to report regularly to the European Parliament;
14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Government and Parliament of Kazakhstan.