Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 1553 (2002)[1]

Honouring of obligations and commitments by the Russian Federation

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly refers to its Resolution 1277 (2002) on the honouring of obligations and commitments by the Russian Federation.

2. In the light of the considerations stated in this resolution, the Assembly informs the Committee of Ministers that the Russian Federation has made significant efforts towards honouring its obligations as a member state of the Council of Europe, which it accepted in Opinion No. 193 (1996) on Russia's request for admission to the Council of Europe. It recognises, however, that a number of obligations, listed in paragraph 8 of Resolution 1277 (2002) still warrant further action. In addition to satisfactory implementation of all outstanding commitments and obligations entered into by the Russian Federation, the Assembly will need to be convinced of the establishment of radio and television channels free of influence of the state and regional government, and of the impartiality of the media in the forthcoming parliamentary and presidential elections.

3. Therefore, the Assembly resolves to pursue, in close co-operation with the Russian delegation, the monitoring procedure in respect of the Russian Federation, with a view to advising and assisting where necessary the Russian authorities in their policy towards complying with Russia's obligations as a member state.

4. Russia's greatest problem evidently remains its obligation and commitment to settle by peaceful means the conflict in Chechnya, with regard to which the Assembly refers to its various resolutions, in particular Resolution 1270 (2002). Therefore, it asks the Committee of Ministers to reiterate its call on the Russian authorities to conduct a proper investigation into all cases of human rights violations and the abuse of power in Chechnya, and to prosecute their perpetrators, irrespective of their functions.

5. The Assembly furthermore recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

encourage the Russian authorities to strengthen co-operation with the Council of Europe in order to ensure full compatibility of Russian legislation and practice with the Organisation's principles and standards, especially with standards guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights and the Strasbourg Court's case-law.Moreover, appropriate information on the Organisation's principles should be available to all parts of Russian society – executive, legislative and judicial branches of power, local and regional government, politicians, and last but not least, civil society;

intensify the co-operation programmes between the Council of Europe and the Russian Federation with a view to assisting the Russian authorities in their efforts to secure fundamental rights and liberties, particularly as regards freedom of expression and the media, and the application of the rule of law across the country's entire territory;

devise specific co-operation activities with the Russian authorities for the elaboration of proposals related to the division of competences between federal state bodies, bodies of the subjects of the Russian Federation and local government bodies;

1. Assembly debate on 23 April 2002 (10th Sitting) (see Doc. 9396, report of the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe, rapporteurs: MM. Atkinson and Bindig). Text adopted by the Assembly on 23 April 2002 (11th Sitting).

whilst noting the ongoing withdrawal of Russian troops and heavy weaponry from the Transnistrian region of Moldova, reiterate its expectation of a complete withdrawal of Russian troops by the deadline set for 31 December 2002. The early, orderly and complete withdrawal of Russian troops from the territory of the Republic of Moldova – together with the disposal of the large ammunition stockpiles – should create more favourable conditions for a final settlement of the Transnistrian conflict, as well as contribute to consolidating peace and security in the region;

as regards the return of diplomatic property transferred to the Soviet Union in 1940 and compensation for those personsdeported from the Baltic states, call on the Russian authorities to settle these issues as quickly as possible, and similarly settle rapidly all issues related to the return of cultural property claimed by Council of Europe member states directly with these states, and on mutually beneficial terms, taking into consideration the need to return the cultural property transferred from Russia during the second world war.