

Slovakia

This Congress,

Having regard to Article F of the Treaty on European Union,

Having regard to Articles 6 and 117, paragraph 2 of the Slovakia/EU Association Agreement, common to all European agreements which ensure adherence to human rights and are a prerequisite to accession,

Having regard to the previous resolution agreed by the ELDR Group in 9 November 1995 on “the threat to democracy in Slovakia” which led to the adoption of a resolution by the European Parliament on 16 November 1995, as well as the Urgency Resolution adopted by the ELDR Council on 4 December 1995 calling on Slovakia to respect fundamental rights,

A. considering the Association Agreement signed between the Slovak Republic and the European Union and given that adherence to the Rule of Law as well as respect for fundamental rights and democracy are fundamental principles of the Association Agreements;

1. Welcomes the decision taken by the European Council of Madrid, which clearly sets the timing according to which the Commission will present its opinion on all the membership applications;

2. Recognises the efforts in the economic field made by the Slovak authorities to fulfil the necessary conditions for accession as set down in the pre-accession agreements; stresses that progress leading to Slovakia's accession to the EU can only be finally completed if similar efforts and progress are achieved as regards development and strengthening of civic society, democracy and the Rule of Law;

3. Calls urgently on the Prime Minister to ensure that opposition parties are involved proportionally in the parliamentary committees and in the boards supervising the secret service, the privatization process and the electronic media in accordance with the democratic principles as has been promised by the Prime Minister;

4. Calls on the Prime Minister to respect the freedom of the press and media and strongly requests that access to objective information should be given to all thereby ensuring the development of a politically active and aware civic society;

5. Calls on the Prime Minister to respect minorities and their fundamental rights; is especially concerned about the lack of a law on the use of minority languages the new administrative and territorial division of Slovakia that is based upon political criteria the lack of institutional

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mechanisms for the minorities to participate effectively in decision-making in matters concerning them;

6. Invites the Prime Minister to double his efforts concerning the development of regional cooperation by means of passing appropriate legislation to improve relations between Slovakia and Hungary;

7. Emphasizes the importance of strengthening the democratic process through active participation of civic society at all levels of decision making; believes that NGOs and independent socio-economic bodies and organisations have an important role to play in strengthening civic society in the run up to accession and is worried about the negative impact of the new Act on Foundations on NGO's;

8. Calls on universities and the academic world in general to be granted independence and autonomy;

9. Stresses to the Prime Minister that, if in future he continues with his policy of weakening the stability of the institutions which guarantee the continuance of democratic principles, human rights, rights of minorities as well as the Rule of Law, the European Union will regard it as necessary to review its assistance and cooperation programmes as agreed under the Association Agreement;

10. Instructs the General Secretary to forward this resolution to the President and to the Government of the Republic of Slovakia, the Slovak National Council, the European Commission, the Council of the European Union, the General Secretary of the Council of Europe and the ELDR Group of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

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