

Conclusions of the Helsinki European Council: Declaration on Chechnya (10-11 December 1999)

Caption: Following the outbreak of the second war in Chechnya in September 1999, the European Council meeting in Helsinki on 10 and 11 December 1999 decides that the application of the TACIS programme for the Russian Federation should be subject to certain conditions.

Source: Helsinki European Council - Presidency Conclusions - 11 December 1999. [ON-LINE]. [s.l.]: Council of the European Union, [01.04.2008]. Disponible sur http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/ACFA4C.htm.

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http://www.cvce.eu/obj/conclusions_of_the_helsinki_european_council_declaration_on_chechnya_10_11_december_1999-en-3d33f58a-19b9-4cc1-8009-614e377f45fb.html

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Helsinki European Council (10 and 11 December 1999) Conclusions of the Presidency

[...]

Annex II Declaration on Chechnya

1. The European Council condemns the intense bombardments of Chechen cities, the threat levelled at the residents of Grozny and the ultimatum set by the Russian military commanders, as well as the treatment of the internally displaced persons as totally unacceptable.
 2. The European Council does not question the right of Russia to preserve its territorial integrity nor its right to fight against terrorism. However the fight against terrorism cannot, under any circumstances, warrant the destruction of cities, nor that they be emptied of neither their inhabitants, nor that a whole population be considered as terrorist.
 3. This behaviour is in contradiction with the basic principles of humanitarian law, the commitments of Russia as made within the OSCE and its obligations as a member of the Council of Europe. This war increases the gap between the Chechen people and the rest of Russia, and threatens to destabilise the whole region. Only a political solution can put an end to this crisis. The European Council is deeply concerned at the threat the continuing conflict poses to the stability of the Caucasus region and possible spill-over from the fighting in Chechnya to Georgia and the effects on her territorial integrity.
 4. The European Council calls upon the Russian authorities:
 - not to carry out the ultimatum against the civilian populations of Grozny;
 - to end the bombing and the disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force against the Chechen population;
 - to allow for the safe delivery of humanitarian aid and the security of the international relief agencies;
 - to start forthwith political dialogue with the elected Chechen authorities.
 5. The European Council urged the Chechen authorities to respect the rules and principles of humanitarian law, to condemn terrorism and to aim at the renewal of a political dialogue.
 6. The European Council expects Russia to fully honour and implement the commitments made in Istanbul. It pays special attention to the forthcoming visit of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office to the region. The European Council urges Russia to use this visit for a dialogue with the elected leaders of the North Caucasus including Chechnya. A field office of the OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya should be opened forthwith in Nazran, Ingushetia.
 7. In the light of the above, the European Council decides to draw the consequences from this situation:
 - for the implementation of the European Union's Common Strategy on Russia, which should be reviewed;
 - for the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, some of the provisions of which should be suspended and the trade provisions applied strictly;
 - for TACIS, the budgetary authority is asked to consider the transfer of some funds from TACIS to humanitarian assistance. Finance in the budget for 2000 should be limited to priority areas, including human rights, the rule of law, support for civil society and nuclear safety.
- It invites the Presidency with the Secretary-General/High Representative to notify this decision and the contents of this declaration urgently at the highest level to the Russian authorities.
It invites the OSCE and the Council of Europe to review, in their field of competence, the modalities of their cooperation with Russia.
8. Russia is a major partner for the European Union. The Union has constantly expressed its willingness to accompany Russia in its transition towards a modern and democratic state. But Russia must live up to its

obligations if the strategic partnership is to be developed. The European Union does not want Russia to isolate herself from Europe.