

Murder of women in Central America and Mexico and the European Union's role in preventing this

2007/2025(INI) - 11/10/2007 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted, 560 votes in favour to 4 against, with 6 abstentions, a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Raül **ROMEVA i RUEDA** (Greens/ALE, ES) on the murders of women (femicides) in Central America and Mexico and the role of the European Union in fighting this phenomenon. The report follows the public hearing on femicide which was held at the European Parliament in April 2006 and organised jointly by that Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality and its Subcommittee on Human Rights.

The report urged the countries of Central America to take all necessary steps to enable violence against women to be combated effectively. These measures must ensure full respect for human rights, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the American Declaration of Human Rights and Duties. The governments of Mexico and Central America were urged to adopt the measures needed to achieve the United Nation's MDGs.

The national authorities of these countries are asked to: (i) promote legislative initiatives defining violence within the family and sexual harassment at work and in all areas of public life as specific crimes; (ii) draw up policies and legislation to deal with impunity and promote gender equality; (iii) respect and facilitate the role of the NGOs and civil-society organisations working for the victims of femicide; (iv) recognise the relatives of the victims and human rights campaigners, by creating effective arrangements for protecting witnesses and promoting reparation mechanisms for the victims' relatives; (v) ensure respect for women's labour rights under national law and at all levels of government. Companies should be encouraged, within the framework of corporate social responsibility, to respect their workers' integrity, safety, physical and mental wellbeing and labour rights.

Acknowledging the legislative advances achieved in Mexico as regards equality between men and women, the report welcomed the federal law on the prevention and elimination of discrimination and urged Mexico to make further progress in this direction.

Parliament called on the Commission, in the context of the agreements in force and those under negotiation, to promote the inclusion of a reciprocal obligation designed to create mechanisms for implementing the human-rights and democracy clause. The Commission was also asked to do the following:

- put forward a methodological proposal concerning ways of coordinating the various EU initiatives designed to combat femicide and the impunity of the perpetrators. Such initiatives should be regularly put forward and discussed by its Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, in conjunction with its Delegation for relations with the countries of Central America and its Delegation to the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee;

- ensure that the human-rights programmes for Mexico and the countries of Central America are covered by a separate budget heading devoted to bilateral cooperation, in order to prevent the limited financial resources allocated from being affected;

- ensure, together with Member States, that both their political dialogue with the governments of Mexico and the countries of Central America and their dialogue with civil society include the issues of violence against women - in particular femicide - and access to justice for victims' relatives and support groups;
- pay greater attention to femicide, violence and discrimination against women in its 2007-2013 Country Strategy Papers and to put forward an action plan;
- make an assessment of the impact on sustainable development to be - as soon as possible and in connection with the negotiations regarding the future EC-Central America Association Agreement - supplemented by an assessment of the impact on equality between the sexes, the findings of which will be taken into account during the negotiations;
- provide information on the progress made on this issue in the context of the negotiations regarding the future EC-Central America Association Agreement, before the negotiations close and in any event before the EU-LAC summit in Lima in May 2008;

Parliament called on Member States to support efforts made as regards non-discrimination between women and men and to contribute to establishing a structured dialogue with a view to exchanging good practices in this field.

Lastly, the report proposed that a joint public hearing be organised by its Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, its Subcommittee on Human Rights and the delegations concerned before the 2008 EU-LAC Lima Summit, with a view to evaluating the measures in place, including the experiences of the relevant bodies set up in Mexico in the fight against gender violence in both the EU and Latin America, including the experiences of the relevant bodies set up in Mexico in the fight against gender violence.