Resolution on combating the rise of extremism in Europe

2007/2665(RSP) - 13/12/2007 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

Following the debate held in plenary on 12 December 2007, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on combating the rise of extremism in Europe by 527 votes for, 15 against and 39 abstentions, and strongly condemned all racist and hate attacks. It called on all authorities to do everything in their power to punish those responsible, and expressed its solidarity with all victims of such attacks and their families. Member State was immune from the intrinsic threats that extremism posed to democracy and, therefore combating the spread of xenophobic attitudes and extremist political movements was a European challenge that requires a joint and coordinated approach.

Parliament requested all Member States to at least provide for the possibility - after a court ruling - of withdrawing public funding from political parties that did not condemn violence and terrorism and did not respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law as set out in the ECHR and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Those that already had this possibility must do so without delay. It also called on the Commission to ensure that no EU funding was available to media which were used as a platform to widely promote racist, xenophobic and homophobic ideas.

Parliament deplored the fact that some mainstream parties had seen fit to give credibility and acceptance to extremist parties by entering into coalition agreements, thereby sacrificing their moral integrity for the sake of short-term political gain and expediency. It urged the Commission and Council to lead the search for appropriate political and legal responses, especially at the preventive stage with reference to young people's education and public information, teaching against totalitarianism and disseminating the principles of human rights and fundamental freedoms in order to keep alive the memory of European history. It also called upon the Member States to develop policies of education for democratic citizenship based on citizens' rights and responsibilities. The Commission and Member States were asked to monitor the full application of legislation designed to prohibit incitement to political and religious violence, racism and xenophobia.

Parliament urged all democratic political forces, regardless of ideology, to avoid any support for extremist parties of a racist or xenophobic character, whether explicit or implicit, and hence also any alliance whatsoever with their elected representatives. Looking ahead to the 2009 European elections, it warned of the possibility that extremist parties might secure representation in the European Parliament and it called on the political groups to take the appropriate measures in order to ensure that a democratic institution was not used as a platform for financing and echoing anti-democratic messages. The EU institutions must give a clear mandate to the Fundamental Rights Agency to investigate the structures of extremist groups in order to assess whether some of them coordinate their work within their groups across the EU or at regional level.

Public personalities should refrain from statements that encourage or incite to hatred or stigmatisation of groups of people on the basis of their race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation or nationality. If public personalities incited to hatred, the fact that they had a high public profile should be considered an aggravating circumstance. Parliament condemned, in particular, the worrying prevalence of anti-semitism. It called on the media to inform the public about the dangers of hate speech and to help promote the principles and values of democracy, equality and tolerance.

Lastly, it called on the Commission to support NGOs and civil society organisations devoted to promoting democratic values, human dignity, solidarity, social inclusion, inter-cultural dialogue and social awareness

of the dangers of radicalisation and violent extremism, and which are devoted to fighting all forms of discrimination.