Resolution on political disqualifications in Venezuela

2008/2656(RSP) - 23/10/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate that took place during the sitting of 23 October 2008, the European Parliament adopted by 51 votes to 1 with no abstention, a resolution on political disqualifications in Venezuela.

The resolution had been tabled for consideration in plenary by the EPP-ED, ALDE, and UEN groups.

Parliament recalls that the Venezuelan authorities are using various lists of citizens ('Tascón list', 'Maisanta list', 'Russián list') to remove public officials from office and to deprive citizens of their right to hold public office and of access to administrative services and procedures. The Venezuelan Comptroller-General has issued an administrative order disqualifying a large number of opposition figures from standing in the regional and local elections to be held in November 2008.

Parliament expresses concern about the list of electoral disqualifications issued by the Venezuelan Comptroller-General. It urges the Venezuelan Government to examine the above administratively imposed political disqualifications with reference to the provisions of Articles 42 and 65 of the Venezuelan Constitution, under which such measures may be taken on a definitive basis by judicial authorities alone, as is customary in all democratic states.

The Venezuelan Government is also urged to comply with the international agreements signed and ratified by Venezuela, including the American Convention on Human Rights, with specific reference to the provisions on political rights set out in Articles 23(1)(b) and 23(2), and Articles 2 and 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Parliament notes that the Venezuelan authorities have arbitrarily expelled from the country the director of the NGO Human Rights Watch, José Miguel Vivanco, and the organisation's deputy director, Daniel Wilkinson, for having presented a critical report on the civil liberties and human rights situation during President Hugo Chávez's 10 years in office. It expresses firm opposition to the harassment and arbitrary expulsion of the human rights defenders, and considers that expulsion to set an extremely serious precedent as regards respect for freedom of expression and the right to criticise that are fundamental to any democratic society.

Members go on to recall that on1 October 2008 of Julio Soto, student leader in the Copei party and President of the Students Union at Zulia State University, was riddled with bullets in his car in the city of Maracaibo – a crime that was committed under strange circumstances and has yet to be cleared up. It vigorously condemns the murder of Julio Soto, conveying its condolences to the victim's family and friends and calling on the Venezuelan authorities to make every possible effort to clear up this crime as soon as possible, so that the perpetrators and those responsible are brought to justice and the crime does not go unpunished.

Lastly, Parliament calls on the Chávez government to put an end to all such practices and to foster a more participative democracy in Venezuela, in full compliance with the principles laid down in the 1999 constitution.