Resolution on the Lithuanian Law on the Protection of Minors against the Detrimental Effects of Public Information

2009/2632(RSP) - 17/09/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate which took place during the sitting on 16th September, the European Parliament adopted by 349 votes to 218 with 46 abstentions a resolution on the situation in Lithuania following the adoption of the law on the protection of minors.

The resolution had been tabled by the ALDE, EPP, S-D, Greens/ALE and GUE/NGL groups.

It refers to the fact that on 14 July 2009 the Lithuanian Parliament approved amendments to the Law on the Protection of Minors against the Detrimental Effects of Public Information that will come into force on 1 March 2010, under which it will be prohibited "to directly disseminate to minors" public information whereby "homosexual, bisexual or polygamous relations are promoted", because it has "a detrimental effect on the development of minors". It asks the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights to give an opinion on the law and the amendments in the light of the EU Treaties and EU law. Parliament notes that the wording of the law is vague and legally unclear and might lead to controversial interpretations.

Members reaffirm the importance of the EU fighting against all forms of discrimination, and in particular discrimination based on sexual orientation. They recall that sexual orientation is a matter falling within the remit of an individual’s right to privacy, guaranteed by international, European and national human rights law, and equality and non-discrimination should be promoted by public authorities, while freedom of expression should be guaranteed for the media, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and individuals. They reaffirm the principle set out in the preamble of the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 20 November 1959 that 'the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection'.

Parliament welcomes the statements made by the new President of Lithuania who has declared that she will act to ensure that the law is in conformity with EU and international requirements. It also welcomes the creation of a working group in Lithuania charged with evaluating possible changes to the law, and invites the President of Lithuania and authorities to ensure that its national laws are compatible with human rights and fundamental freedoms as enshrined in international and European law. It notes that the Law on the Protection of Minors against the Detrimental Effects of Public Information approved by the Lithuanian Parliament on 14 July 2009 is not yet in force and needs to be reviewed before it enters into force.

Parliament instructs its competent committee to follow up the issue.