Resolution on China: minority rights and application of the death penalty

2009/2779(RSP) - 26/11/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 40 votes to 1 with 23 abstentions a resolution on China: minority rights and application of the death penalty.

The resolution had been tabled by the EPP, ALDE, and Greens/ALE groups.

Parliament reiterates its **long-standing opposition to the death penalty in all cases and under all circumstances**. It recognises the positive move by the Supreme People's Court, in January 2007, to review death sentences but deplores the fact that it has not led to a significant decrease in the number of executions in China, noting that China still carries out the greatest number of executions worldwide. Members urge the Chinese Government, therefore, to **adopt a moratorium on the death penalty** immediately and unconditionally. They condemn the execution of the two Tibetans, Lobsang Gyaltsen and Loyak, and of the nine persons of Uighur ethnicity following, respectively, the events in March 2008 in Lhasa and the riots of 5-7 July 2009 in Urumqi. The Chinese authorities are asked to **suspend all the other death sentences** and to commute those sentences, in the case of persons duly found guilty of acts of violence, to terms of imprisonment.

Members stress that **China's human rights record remains a matter of serious concern**. They insist on the need for rigorous follow-up between all rounds of the EU-China human rights dialogue, with a view to ensuring the application of the recommendations resulting from previous dialogues, which were mutually agreed by both parties, and in the form of the EU-China legal seminars on human rights which used to precede the rounds of the dialogue and which involved academic and civil-society representatives. The Council and the Commission are called upon to put the questions of abolition of the death penalty and observance of ethnic minorities' and religious rights on the agenda for the 12th EU-China Summit on 30 November 2009, and to continue to pursue inclusion in the new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, currently in negotiation, of a clause concerning respect for human rights in China.

Parliament deplores the often **discriminatory treatment** of ethnic and religious minorities in China. It calls on the Chinese authorities to make every effort to develop a **genuine Han-Uighur dialogue**, to adopt more inclusive and comprehensive economic policies in Xinjiang aimed at strengthening local ownership, and to protect the cultural identity of the Uighur population, which is largely Muslim, shares linguistic and cultural bonds with Central Asia and accounts for almost half of Xinjiang's 20 million people. Parliament reiterates its solidarity with all the victims of the events in Urumqi, XUAR, in July 2009, while recognising the duty of the State institutions to maintain public order. It is concerned at reports alleging that **disproportionate force was used against ethnic Uighurs** and that large numbers of them were detained. The resolution calls on the Chinese government to end immediately the "Strike Hard" campaign, under which the rights of the people in XUAR are being repressed, while the causes of unrest are being ignored.

On **Tibet**, Parliament calls for the reopening of sincere and results-orientated **dialogue between the Chinese Government and the Dalai Lama's representatives,** based on the 'Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People' and leading towards a positive, substantial and meaningful change in Tibet consistent with the principles outlined in the Constitution and laws of the People's Republic of China.