Resolution on prisoners of conscience in Cuba

2010/2592(RSP) - 11/03/2010 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 509 votes to 30 with 14 abstentions a resolution on prisoners of conscience in Cuba.

The resolution was tabled by EPP, EFD, S&D, ALDE, ECR and Greens/EFA groups.

It strongly condemns the avoidable and cruel death of the dissident political prisoner Orlando Zapata Tamayo after a hunger strike of 85 days. It notes that this the first time in nearly 40 years that a Cuban activist has died on hunger strike in protest against government abuses, and is considered a serious step backwards for human rights in Cuba, resulting in a wave of protest at international level and in more Cuban political and dissident prisoners going on hunger strike. It voices its concern at the situation of the political prisoners and dissidents who went on hunger strike following Zapata's death, welcoming the fact that most of them are now taking food again, but drawing attention to the alarming state of the journalist and psychologist Guillermo Fariñas.

Members call on the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Commissioner responsible for cooperation immediately to begin **a structured dialogue with Cuban civil society and with those who support a peaceful transition in Cuba**, using the Community's development cooperation mechanisms, in particular under the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights. It urges the EU institutions to give their unconditional support and full encouragement to the launching of a peaceful process of political transition to multi-party democracy in Cuba.

Parliament urges the Council and Commission to step up action to demand the release of political prisoners and promote and provide guarantees for the work of human rights defenders, along the lines agreed by the Foreign Affairs Council in its conclusions of 8 December 2009. It deplores the absence of any significant signs of response by the Cuban authorities to the calls by the EU and the international community for all political prisoners to be released and for fundamental freedoms, especially freedom of expression and political association, to be fully respected. The resolution calls on the Cuban Government for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience.

Lastly, Parliament voices its profound solidarity with the entire Cuban people and its support for them in their progress towards democracy and respect and promotion of fundamental freedoms.