Resolution on the World day against the death penalty

2010/2855(RSP) - 07/10/2010 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following a debate that took place in plenary on 6 October 2010, the European Parliament adopted by 574 votes to 25, with 39 abstentions a resolution on the World Day against the death penalty.

The text adopted in plenary had been tabled as a joint resolution by the EPP, S&D, ALDE, Greens/EFA, GUE/NGL as well as Fiorello PROVERA (EFD, IT).

Parliament **reiterates its long-standing opposition to the death penalty in all cases and under all circumstances** and emphasises once again that abolition of the death penalty contributes to the enhancement of human dignity and the progressive development of human rights. It condemns all executions wherever they take place and calls on the EU and its Member States to enforce the implementation of the UN resolution on a **universal moratorium on executions** with a view to total abolition in all states which still practise the death penalty. Parliament points out that 43 countries worldwide retain the death penalty and the highest number of executions took place in China, Iran and Iraq (and that China alone carried out about 5 000 or 88% of the world total of executions).

Members call on the Council and the Commission to take action in order to progressively restrict its use while insisting that it be carried out according to international minimum standards; expresses its deep concern regarding the imposition of the death penalty on minors and on persons with mental or intellectual disability and calls for their immediate and definitive ending. They also urge the EU to use all tools of diplomacy and cooperation assistance available to it to work towards the abolition of the death penalty. They also encourage the states that have not abolished the death penalty to respect safeguards protecting the rights of those facing the death penalty. They call on the **United States and Belarus to adopt an immediate moratorium on executions** and on Kazakhstan and Latvia to amend provisions in their national legislation that still allow for the imposition of the death penalty for certain crimes under exceptional circumstances.

They urge the UN to draw up a third resolution on the death penalty at UNGA65 which should in priority address:

- the abolition of 'State secrets' regarding the death penalty;
- the position of a Special Envoy who would not only monitor the situation and apply pressure with a view to increased transparency within the systems of capital punishment, but also continue to persuade those who still maintain the death penalty to adopt the UN line for a moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty;
- the 'most serious crimes' threshold for the lawful application of capital punishment.

They also call on the Council and the Commission, notably in view of the setting-up of the EEAS, to provide guidance for a comprehensive and effective European death penalty policy with regard to dozens of confirmed European nationals facing execution in third countries. They request the Council and the Commission, when it comes to concluding agreements with countries that still apply the death penalty or with countries which have not signed the moratorium with a view to abolishing the death penalty to strongly encourage them to do so.

Parliament requests the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission and the Members States to continue to speak with one voice and to keep in

mind that the main political content of the resolution must be the adoption of a worldwide moratorium as a crucial step towards the abolition of the death penalty. She should systematically raise this issue in her contacts with countries that continue to apply capital punishment.

Lastly, Parliament calls on the Council and the Commission to use the World day and the European Day against the Death Penalty to highlight, among others, the cases of Sakineh Mohamadi Ashtiani, Zahara Bahrami, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Troy Davis, Oleg Grishkovstov, Andrei Burdyko and Ebrahim Hamidi, Suliamon Olyfemi and Siti Zainab Binti Duhri Rupa.