Resolution on Parliament's position on the 19th Session of the UN Human Rights Council

2012/2530(RSP) - 16/02/2012 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the 19th Session of the UN Human Rights Council.

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

It takes note of the ongoing process to confirm EU priorities for the 19th Session of the UNHRC, and welcomes the designation of Burma/Myanmar, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Syria, Libya and Iran as key issues. Members welcome several items on agenda of the 19th regular session and call on Member States to make clear that universal and indivisible human rights apply to people regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

The work of the Human Rights Council: Parliament welcomes the increased mainstreaming of human rights in the work of the UN, and reiterates its call to EU Member States to lead by example in supporting the universality of the work of the Human Rights Council, notably in ratifying all international human rights instruments which it has established. It regrets the fact that the review process has not led to the development of improved membership criteria as regards commitments and performance on human rights issues, and recommends that the EU and its Member States state their clear opposition to the practice of regional groups putting forward ‘clean slates’, and to lead by example on this matter.

Human rights violation in the Arab Spring Countries: Members take note of the restoration of Libya's membership of the UNHRC but regrets that the opportunity was not seized to draw up transparent criteria for reinstating suspended members, which should logically be based on the initial criteria required for election. They consider that the **human rights situation in Libya** remains an area of concern, notably regarding the conditions of detention and the treatment of detainees held by various militias without effective control by the Interim Government over the brigades.

Parliament condemns in the strongest terms the **widespread brutal repression and systematic violations of human rights by the Syrian regime** against its population. It welcomes the decision to establish the mandate of Special Rapporteur on Syria and welcomes all the diplomatic efforts undertaken by the EU's HR/VP Baroness Ashton and its Member States towards China and Russia in the UN Security Council with a view to the immediate adoption of a resolution on Syria.

Parliament calls on EU Member States to work towards the establishment of a resolution on the human rights situation in **Bahrain** at the UNHRC. On the occasion of the second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) on **Algeria,** it calls on the EU to focus on the issue of enforced disappearances and to highlight the lack of follow-up by Algeria to the recommendations adopted by the Treaty bodies on this matter.

Others: Members welcome the decision to appoint a Special Rapporteur on Iran and call for an extension of the latter’s mandate. They welcome the preliminary positive changes in Burma/Myanmar's attitude towards greater cooperation with the Special Procedures and call for the release all remaining prisoners of conscience. Parliament also:

- calls on the HR/VP and the EU Member States to work towards a strong EU common position on the follow-up to the Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza conflict, publicly demanding the implementation of its recommendations and accountability for all violations of international law, regardless of the alleged perpetrator;

- stresses the need to strengthen the accountability process in Sri Lanka and continue to call for the establishment of a UN commission of inquiry into all crimes committed;

- is alarmed by the deteriorating human rights situation in Kazakhstan and stresses the need to discuss this at the forthcoming session of the UNHRC;

- stresses the need for the reestablishment of the mandate of an independent expert to monitor the human rights situation in the DRC;

- asks he EU to seek a HRC resolution on the situation in Eritrea, given the country's deplorable and deteriorating track records with respect to freedom of expression and freedom of religion;

- stresses the need for international monitoring of the human rights situation in China and

- regrets that freedom of religion and expression is being constantly violated on the territory of historical Tibet, and that an increasing number of Tibetans have recently committed self-immolation as an extreme form of protest against the suppression of their rights and freedoms.

Universal Periodic Review: Parliament emphasises that those recommendations which were not accepted by the State under review should not be excluded from the process. It calls on states participating in the UPR to focus their assessment of third countries on their follow-up and the implementation of the recommendations of UN treaty bodies and Special Procedures. EU Member States are asked to provide technical assistance in order to help UPR recommendations be implemented, in line with the commitments undertaken in the UNHRC's institution-building package and the outcome of the review process.

Special Procedures: Special Procedures lie at the core of the UN human rights system and the credibility and effectiveness of the UNHRC rest on the Procedures' full implementation and the Council's cooperation with the mandate holders. Parliament regrets that the Special Procedures' early-warning capacity was not further strengthened by providing for a mechanism allowing them to automatically trigger the consideration of a situation by the UNHRC, and also regrets that there is no mechanism to follow up on the implementation of recommendations of Special Procedures.

EU involvement: Parliament welcomes the increase of EIDHR funds announced and stresses that these additional funds should also be used to increase support to the UNHRC. It expects that, given the scope of new challenges that have emerged in recent times, the Commission might want to increase the amount of its annual contribution.

Members call on the EU and its Member States:

- to ensure that human rights are also fully respected in internal policies, in order to avoid double standards and to increase consistency between internal and external policies;

- to address the question of complicity of EU companies in human rights abuses outside the EU and to work on the implementation of a system of sanctions towards these companies or at least to keep track of such cases and to make sure that these companies do not get EU subsidies or any kind of help of the EEAS;

- to improve the EU's capacity for outreach through the development of strong alliances with key regional partners and all moderate states, as well as through a mechanism to enlist the support of the HR/VP to lobby third country capitals.

Parliament emphasises the **importance of the formulation of strong EU common positions**, in order to harness the collective weight of the EU and its Member States, and takes note of the development of the capacity of the Council Working Group on Human Rights (COHOM) and the efforts to identify key priorities. It deplores the fact that the search for common ground too often leads to an acceptance of the lowest common denominator, particularly in final Council Conclusions and calls for bolder, more ambitious action. It encourages the EEAS, particularly the EU's delegations in Geneva and New York, to increase its coherence, based on timely and substantive consultation, and the visibility of the EU's action in order to enhance its credibility in the world.

Lastly, Parliament warmly welcomes the HR/VP's statement to Parliament on 13 December 2011, following up on Parliament's longstanding call for the creation of an **EU Special Representative on Human Rights** and urges that this appointment be made as swiftly as possible.