Resolution on the possible withdrawal of Venezuela from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

2012/2653(RSP) - 24/05/2012 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 37 votes to 15 with 4 abstentions a resolution on the possible withdrawal of Venezuela from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

The resolution was tabled by the EFD, ALDE, ECR and EPP groups. It is concerned at Venezuela's announcement on 2 May 2012 that it is establishing a state committee to evaluate the possibility of withdrawing from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and **calls on the Venezuelan authorities to reconsider this position.** Members fear that withdrawal from the Inter-American System could lead to the isolation of Venezuela and the further **deterioration of its human rights record**.

Members recall that the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IAHCR), came into being in 1959 as part of the Organisation of American States (OAS) human rights system, with an Inter-American Court of Human Rights, which was established in 1979. Parliament further recalls 1970 to 2011 four decisions of the IACHR concerned Venezuela, and the Court has ruled in 12 cases from 2004 to 2012. In the last few years Venezuela has on several occasions criticised the IACHR and the Court, and has repeatedly threatened to withdraw, arguing that the IACHR is biased and applies double standards.

Members note that the content of Parliament’s resolutions, notably those on the political disqualification of opposition leaders and acts of political persecution such as the closing of RCTV, has been endorsed by several decisions and recommendations of the IACHR. Following those unfavourable recommendations and their disregard or non-implementation by the Venezuelan authorities, President Chávez has activated the mechanism for withdrawing his country from the international body.

Parliament encourages the Government of Venezuela and all other states in the region to **recognise and implement the IACHR's decisions and recommendations** to cooperate with regional and international human rights mechanisms, and urges them not to take any measures that would weaken human rights protection. It deplores the decisions of the Venezuelan legislature and judiciary to support President Chavez’s attempt to withdraw from the IACHR, which highlight the country's non-compliance with the principle of the separation of powers and the absolute submission of the legislature and judiciary to the political decisions of the President.

The resolution welcomes all the work done by the IACHR, notably on issues relating to freedom of expression, the rights of indigenous peoples, the prevention of torture, social rights and women's rights, as well as the fostering of public awareness of human rights in the region, and encourages it to continue this work with a view to achieving full respect for human rights. It supports regional human rights bodies as part of the international human rights system, and invites the EU institutions to intensify their overall support for the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the IAHCR and the Convention. Those countries that have not yet acceded to the Inter-American System of Human Rights are asked to do so swiftly and to participate in it fully, thus strengthening the institutional authority of this system.