Resolution on the situation in the Central African Republic

2013/2514(RSP) - 17/01/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 51 votes to 0 with 1 abstention a resolution on the situation in the Central African Republic (CAR).

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

Members express concern over the situation prevailing in the CAR since the launch of the Seleka offensive on 10 December 2012, deploring the fact that the recent offensive has put civilian lives at risk and threatened the security and stability of the CAR, and condemning all attempts to seize power by force. They recall, in this connection, that 'Seleka' (meaning 'coalition' in Sango), an alliance of various rebel armed movements originating predominantly in the north-east of the country, launched this armed offensive advancing southwards from near the frontier with Chad.

However, Parliament welcomes the **peace agreements** signed on 11 January 2013 in Libreville after three-way peace talks between the Central African Republic Government, the Seleka rebel coalition and the political opposition, under the aegis of Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), calling on all parties to implement the agreement in good faith and to commit to achieving lasting peace in the CAR. Members call on the EU to **support ECCAS in overseeing the implementation of the recent accords**.

They are convinced that in order to secure a peaceful resolution to the conflict and ensure lasting stability, the composition of the government of national unity must represent all the country's political forces, and they welcome the signing by President Bozizé of a decree removing the country's prime minister in order to form a national unity government, which will be led by a prime minister chosen by the political opposition. They also welcome the decision to hold **elections for a new National Assembly** and hope that they will take place under international supervision, including in the areas that are currently occupied by the rebel forces, in order to avoid the result being contested. In this connection, the resolution calls on the **Commission to offer technical support to the CAR** authorities with a view to the adoption of the relevant legislation for organising the upcoming elections. Parliament takes the view that the **EU should consider sending an electoral observation mission to the CAR**. It calls on the HR/VP Catherine Ashton to capitalise on the EU's extended relationship with the CAR to **actively promote the implementation of a comprehensive peacebuilding strategy** that would promote the country's normalisation and sustainable development.

Parliament is deeply concerned by the **serious human rights violations** that occurred in the CAR during the offensive by Seleka and expresses its deep concern at reports of targeting of ethnic and religious minorities and intimidation and arbitrary arrests of political opponents in Bangui. It is particularly worried by reports indicating an increase in the recruitment and use of child soldiers and calls on all parties to the conflict to end this practice. Members recall that even before the recent outbreak of violence, 2 500 children were already part of the armed groups active in the CAR, and the UNICEF office in Bangui has received credible information concerning increasing recruitment and use of child soldiers by both rebel groups and pro-government militias. Parliament wants the international community to engage more actively with the CAR in order to address the country's long-standing problems and to achieve a sustainable political solution.

Parliament notes that, despite the fact that it is a **country rich in natural resources** (timber, gold, diamonds, uranium, etc), the CAR ranks only 179th out of 187 in terms of its Human Development Index and, with around 70 % of its population living below the poverty line, remains one of the poorest countries in the world. Accordingly, it considers that transparent access to and control over the natural resources and equitable redistribution through the state budget of revenue from the exploitation of those resources are indispensable for the sustainable development of the country. Furthermore, transparency and public scrutiny in the mining sector is crucial to efficient mining management, sustainable development and tackling corruption. Parliament emphasises that the possible trafficking of rough diamonds from rebel-controlled areas in the CAR could reignite the conflict and further destabilise the country, and it calls on the Government of the CAR to take more measures to combat the exploitation and illegal trading of natural resources.