Resolution on violence against women in India

2013/2512(RSP) - 17/01/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on violence against women in India.

The resolution was tabled by the, EPP, S&D, ALDE, Greens/EFA, ECR, GUE/NGL groups and Jaroslav P AŠKA (EFD, SK).

It expresses its deepest solidarity with the victims of the New Delhi attack in December, when a 23-year-old student was gang-raped and her companion assaulted, and it expresses solidarity also with the victims of all other such attacks, whether or not reported by the media. Members welcome the great wave of solidarity in India and internationally with the rape victims and hopes that the mass demonstrations will help speed up the necessary reforms.

They expect India, as a democracy having significant relations with the EU, to ensure respect for democratic principles, fundamental rights and human rights, in particular the rule of law and the rights of women. Members deeply regret that more was not done to provide immediate assistance to the victims of the attacks and that in this case and other such cases low respect for women, lack of medical aid, deficient policing and absence of legal remedies discourage rape victims from bringing charges against rapists. They **remind the Indian Government of its duties under the Indian Constitution,** especially its duty to end practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

The Indian authorities are asked to develop coordinated responses to gender-based violence, and especially sexual assault, and the Commission is asked to assist in such development.. The EU's and Member States' representations in India are urged to **prioritise programmes addressing violence against women,** including in education, as well as programmes with particular focus on women and girls. Members want the Indian authorities to take immediate action and implement effective measures in order to improve the handling of rape and sexual assault by the Indian police forces, including setting up specific units within each police unit.

Parliament asks the Council and the Commission to ensure that the **EU continues to provide targeted sectoral assistance** in India with a view to meeting the MDGs, under the next multiannual financial framework and in the next country strategy paper post-2013. This should include **social sector support for women's health and education and best practice in good governance,** decision-making and development, including methods of improved service delivery in order to address poverty, gender issues, institutional reforms and public-sector management.

Whilst welcoming the establishment of a new fast-track court to specifically deal with sexual violence against women, Parliament expresses concern over the fact that the **trial of the accused is closed to reporters,** with a prohibition on printing or publishing any matter in relation to any such proceedings except with the permission of the court, a circumstance which has caused unease among the general public. Stating that those found guilty should receive punishment equal to their crime, Parliament reiterates, however, its **long-standing opposition to the death penalty, in all cases and under all circumstances.**

It expresses deep concern at the widespread violence perpetrated against **Dalit women and girls** in India, including sexual violence by men from the dominant castes, and at the extraordinarily high level of impunity for perpetrators in such cases. Parliament calls on the Government of India to treat all cases of sexual violence towards all women equally, and to investigate and prosecute such cases in an equal, fair, transparent and speedy manner.