Resolution on Iraq: the plight of minority groups, including the Iraqi Turkmen

2013/2562(RSP) - 14/03/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 64 votes to zero, with one abstention, a resolution on Iraq: the plight of minority groups, including the Iraqi Turkmen.

The resolution was tabled by the EPP, S&D, ALDE, ECR, and Greens/EFA Groups and Jaroslav PAŠKA (EFD, SK).

Parliament is deeply concerned at the increasing acts of violence suffered by the civilian population in Iraq, notably between Sunnis and Shi'ites but also in **attacks against religious, ethnic and cultural minorities.** It recalls that there has been an ongoing dispute between the Turkmen, allegedly the third-largest ethnic group in Iraq, and Kurds over Kirkuk, a region rich in oil, with Turkmen subject to attacks and abductions by both Kurdish forces and Arab extremist groups, and both Sunni and Shia Turkmen being targeted on sectarian grounds.

Members express grave concern that the new surge of instability and sectarian violence in Iraq could jeopardise the **forthcoming provincial elections on 20 April 2013**, cancellation of which would jeopardise the chances of a more inclusive governance structure.

The EU is asked to support the Iraqi government in organising peaceful, free and fair elections in April 2013. Parliament also insists that the **Cooperation Council established by the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement** between the EU and Iraq be used as a channel to convey to the Iraqi side the concerns over the situation of ethnic and religious minorities in the country.

Despite the **guarantees of equality before the law for all citizens** in the Iraqi Constitution, and guarantees of autonomy for minorities in Constitution of the Kurdistan Region, the resolution notes that minorities continue to be plagued by ethnic and sectarian violence and discrimination. Members call on both the Iraqi Government and the regional government of Kurdistan to **conduct a full investigation into the recent terrorist attacks in the region**, including the most deadly recent bombing of a Shia mosque in Tuz Khurmatu on 23 January 2013, and to bring those responsible to justice.

Parliament also appeals to the Iraqi government to declare a **moratorium on all executions, with a view to abolishing the death penalty.**

Lastly, it applauds the successes achieved by the EUJUST LEX mission and stresses the **importance of giving sufficient prominence in EUJUST LEX initiatives** – where possible – to Turkmen rights and minority rights in general.