Resolution on the EU strategy towards Iran

2014/2625(RSP) - 03/04/2014 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the EU strategy towards Iran.

Recalling that negotiations on a comprehensive trade and cooperation agreement and on a political dialogue agreement between the EU and Iran started **in 2002** and that this process was interrupted **in 2005** as a result of revelations concerning Iran's clandestine nuclear activities, Parliament welcomed the Geneva interim agreement between the E3/EU+3 and Iran on **Iran's nuclear programme**. It stressed that there could be no alternative to a peaceful negotiated solution that addressed the international community' s concerns and it welcomes the decisions taken by the Council at its meeting of 20 January 2014 with a view to implementing the Joint Plan of Action, in particular the provisions on partial sanction relief. Parliament believed that, once a comprehensive agreement ensuring the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme was reached, **nuclear-related sanctions against Iran should be gradually removed.**

On prospects for EU–Iran relations: Members hoped that the progress in the implementation of the Joint Plan of Action and in the negotiations for the Geneva agreement would pave the way for more constructive relations between the EU and Iran. They called on the European External Action Service (EEAS) to carry out all the preparatory work for the opening of a Union delegation in Tehran by the end of 2014.

Parliament invited the Council, **subject to substantial progress being made in the negotiations on the nuclear issue**, to start a discussion on specific steps that could lead to an improvement in bilateral relations between the EU and Iran, including a possible future **contractual framework for these relations** and the development of sectoral cooperation, focusing for example on the development of civil society and the private sector in Iran, as well as on the areas of the fight against narcotic drugs, environmental cooperation, technology transfer, infrastructure development and planning, education and culture, child protection and health, etc. In the meantime, it invited the Commission and the EEAS to use all tools available to the EU to make a concerted effort to empower and develop civil society in Iran and to increase the number of exchanges for students.

On regional issues: Parliament considered that Iran should use its considerable influence in Syria to **stop the bloody civil war** and called on Iran's leadership to adopt a constructive role in the international efforts to find a solution to the Syrian crisis. Furthermore, greater engagement between the EU and Iran on the basis of credible implementation of the Joint Plan of Action and, in the future, of the comprehensive agreement, could be beneficial in terms of stabilising the situation in the Middle East and Afghanistan.

On human rights, Parliament expressed alarm with regard to the high number of executions in 2013 and 2014, **including of minors**. It condemned the restrictions on personal freedom as well as the repression and discrimination on the basis of religion, belief, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation. Members called, therefore, for the EU to **mainstream human rights in all aspects of its relations with Iran**. They believed that a high-level and inclusive human rights dialogue with Iran should be part of the future policy framework that included the judiciary and security forces and establishes clearly defined benchmarks against which progress could be measured. Once again, **Members called for Iran to declare a moratorium on the death penalty.**

Lastly, Parliament recommended measures to: (i) create an environment conducive to the proper functioning of civil society organisations; (ii) strengthen freedom of expression; (iii) improve judicial procedures; (iv) improve the position of women in Iran.