Resolution on Pakistan: recent cases of persecution

2014/2694(RSP) - 17/04/2014 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 463 to 45 votes, with 37 abstentions, a resolution on Pakistan: recent cases of persecution.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled as a joint resolution by the EPP, S&D, ALDE, Greens/EFA and ECR groups.

Faced by the sharp increase in sectarian violence and religious intolerance towards minorities, as seen in Pakistan, Parliament calls on the Pakistani authorities to respect freedom of expression and the freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief.

Blasphemy: recalling that due to Pakistan's blasphemy laws, it is dangerous for religious minorities to express themselves freely or engage openly in religious activities, Members stated that such laws have caused global concern for a number of years. They therefore call on the Pakistani authorities to:

- **release prisoners who are convicted on the grounds of blasphemy**, and to overrule the death sentences on appeal;
- provide sufficient protection to all those involved in blasphemy cases, including by shielding judges from outside pressure;
- review of the Pakistani laws on blasphemy;
- reform the madrassas by establishing a basic curriculum that meets international standards.

Religious violence: Parliament strongly condemns all acts of violence against religious communities as well as all kinds of discrimination and intolerance on the grounds of religion and belief. It calls on the Government of Pakistan to intervene to protect victims of religiously motivated mob violence, and notably to ban public hate speech. It strongly **condemns the application of the death penalty under any circumstances**, and calls on the Government of Pakistan as a matter of urgency to turn the de facto moratorium on the death penalty into the effective abolition of the death penalty.

The Pakistani government is urged to increase efforts aimed at better inter-religious understanding, to actively address religious hostility by societal actors, to combat religious intolerance, acts of violence and intimidation, and to act against the perception of impunity.

The pivotal role of Pakistan: Parliament stresses the important role Pakistan plays in fostering stability in the whole region. It encourages Pakistan to play a constructive role in promoting **a secure Afghanistan** , and therefore urges the Pakistani Government to strengthen respect for fundamental human rights in its own country as well as in the whole region.