Resolution on Paraguay: legal aspects related to child pregnancy

2015/2733(RSP) - 11/06/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on Paraguay: legal aspects related to child pregnancy.

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

Child pregnancies in Paraguay: according to recent UN data, 19% of pregnant girls in Paraguay are minors. About 600 girls aged 14 or under become pregnant each year in Paraguay. Therefore, in Latin America, the risk of maternal death is four times higher among adolescents under the age of 16. Early pregnancies are also dangerous for the baby, with a mortality rate 50% higher than average.

To illustrate this point, on 21 April 2015 a 10-year-old girl went to the Trinidad Maternity and Children's Hospital in Asunción and a 21-week pregnancy was detected following her being raped.

In this regard, Members urged the Paraguayan authorities to conduct an independent and impartial investigation into the aforementioned rape and to bring the perpetrator to justice. They consider it regrettable that **women's and girls' bodies, specifically with respect to their sexual health and reproductive rights, still remain an ideological battleground** and called on Paraguay to recognise the inalienable rights of women and girls to bodily integrity and autonomous decision-making as regards, inter alia, the right to access voluntary family planning and **safe and legal abortion**. They believe that the general prohibition on therapeutic abortion and abortion of pregnancies resulting from rape and incest, and the refusal to provide free health cover in cases of rape, **amounts to torture**.

Recalling that no 10-year-old girl is ready to become a mother, Members urged the Commission to speed up its work on a proposal to Parliament and the Council with a view to making it possible for the EU to ratify and implement the Istanbul Convention, so as to ensure coherence between EU internal and external action on violence against children, women and girls.

Legal abortion: Parliament called on the Council to include the issue of safe and legal abortion in the EU Guidelines on rape and violence against women and girls. It asked the Commission to ensure that European development cooperation follows an approach that is based on human rights, with a particular emphasis on gender equality and combating all forms of sexual violence against women and girls. It stressed the fact that universal access to health, in particular sexual and reproductive health and the associated rights, is a **fundamental human right**, and emphasised the right to voluntarily access family planning services, including safe and legal abortion-related care.

Lastly, it called:

- on the Commission and the Council to develop data-gathering methods and indicators in respect of this phenomenon, and encouraged the European External Action Service (EEAS) to include the issue in the development and implementation of the human rights country strategies;
- on the EEAS to establish good practices for combating rape and sexual violence against women and girls in third countries;
- the EU-CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) Heads of State or Government, at their second summit, to augment the chapter on gender-based violence in the EU-CELAC Action Plan 2013-2015.