Protection and non-discrimination with regard to minorities in the EU Member States

2017/2937(RSP) - 07/02/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution tabled by the Committee on Petitions on protection and non-discrimination with regard to minorities in the EU Member States. It noted that the Committee on Petitions has received several petitions raising concerns about various practices that discriminate against EU citizens belonging to minorities and has organised a hearing on the different issues raised.

Members deplored the fact that persons belonging to minorities still encounter obstacles in ensuring respect for their fundamental rights and remain victims of hate speech and hate crimes. They observed that **minority issues have not been high enough on the EU agenda** and called for an integrated approach to ensure that Member States deal appropriately with the diversity of people in their societies.

Combating discrimination against autochthonous, national and linguistic minorities: this is both a national and EU responsibility. Parliament considered it necessary to **improve the EU's legislative framework** to protect the rights of persons belonging to minorities in a comprehensive manner. The EU lacks effective tools to monitor respect for minority rights and the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights should carry out enhanced monitoring of discrimination against national minorities in Member States. Members recalled that the protection of national minorities and the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of language and membership of a national minority are enshrined in the Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

EU legal framework on minorities: Member States were called upon to ensure that their legal systems guarantee that persons belonging to a minority are not discriminated against and to take targeted protection measures based on relevant international norms. Parliament condemned any discriminatory treatment by public officials of persons belonging to minorities.

Parliament called for the Racial Equality Directive and the Equal Treatment in Employment Directive to be revised. It deeply regretted that little progress has been made on the adoption of the proposal for an Equal Treatment Directive and called on the Commission and the Council to relaunch the relevant negotiations.

All Member States were asked to ratify the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Protocol No 12 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

Protection of minority languages: stating linguistic rights must be respected in communities where there is more than one official language, Parliament encouraged Member States to ensure that the right to use a minority language is upheld in accordance with the EU Treaties. It also called on the Commission to strengthen the promotion of the teaching and use of regional and minority languages.

Rights of LGBTI persons: Parliament recommended the monitoring of LGBTI rights and providing clear information on the recognition of cross-border rights for LGBTI persons and their families in the EU. It called on the Commission to take action in order to ensure that LGBTI individuals and their families could exercise their right to free movement in accordance with both Article 21 of the TFEU and Article 21 of the Charter.