Resolution on Vietnam, notably the situation of political prisoners

2018/2925(RSP) - 15/11/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution tabled the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs on Vietnam, notably the situation of political prisoners.

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

It condemned the **continuing violations of human rights in Vietnam**, including the sentencing, political intimidation, surveillance, harassment, assaults and unfair trials of political activists, journalists, bloggers, dissidents and human rights defenders for exercising their freedom of expression either online or offline. Members cited the recent prison terms of between 14 to 20 years handed down on human rights defenders and political prisoners, noting that an estimated 160 activists are serving prison sentences in Vietnam and around 16 activists are being held in pre-trial detention, according to the Vietnamese Political Prisoner Database. Members insisted that treatment of detainees should be in line with international standards, including the right to access lawyers, medical professionals and family members. They called for an end to all restrictions on and acts of harassment against human rights defenders who must be able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisal.

Parliament stated that the Vietnamese Government and the EU should make commitments to improving respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in the country, as it is a **cornerstone of the bilateral relations between Vietnam and the Union**, notably in view of the ratification of the **EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA)** and in view of the EU-Vietnam Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA).

Parliament called for an end to:

- **restrictions on freedom of religion** and an end to the harassment of religious communities, noting that the Catholic Church and non-recognised religions, such as the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam, several Protestant churches and ethnic minority Montagnards, continue to suffer severe religious persecution;
- **repressive legal provisions** restricting fundamental rights and freedoms, notably Vietnam’s Criminal Code, its law on cybersecurity,

The Vietnamese was asked government to bring legislation regulating public gatherings and demonstrations into conformity with the rights of free assembly and association.

Parliament called on the EEAS and the Commission to support civil society groups and individuals defending human rights in Vietnam and to **monitor progress under the Human Rights Dialogue** through the introduction of benchmarks and monitoring mechanisms. It urged the EU delegation in Hanoi to provide all appropriate support to imprisoned human rights defenders and prisoners of conscience, including by arranging prison visits, monitoring trials and providing legal assistance. Member States were called upon to intensify their efforts to **press for concrete human rights improvements** in Vietnam during the upcoming Universal Periodic Review of Vietnam at the UN Human Rights Council. In addition, Parliament reiterated its call for an **EU-wide ban** on the export, sale, update and maintenance of any form of security equipment which can be or is used for internal repression, including internet surveillance technology, to states with a worrying human rights record

Lastly, Members noted that the **death penalty** continues to be applied in Vietnam but the number of executions is unknown, since the Vietnamese authorities classify death penalty statistics as a state secret. They reiterated their opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances and called on the Vietnamese authorities to introduce an immediate moratorium on the use of the death penalty as a step towards abolition.