Resolution on the situation in Nicaragua

2019/2615(RSP) - 14/03/2019 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the situation in Nicaragua.

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

Parliament underlined that Nicaragua is suffering from a serious breach of democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law as a result of the events that took place in April and May 2018, when the Nicaraguan authorities harshly repressed peaceful protests, followed by a surge of backlash against the opposition and the media. Parliament reiterated the importance of its resolution adopted on 31 May 2018. Following a visit to the country by a European Parliament delegation in January 2019, Parliament stated that the visit made by its delegation served to establish a true picture of the current situation, rejecting the official Nicaraguan Government position that the latter had been victims of a US-led coup d'état and misinformation campaigns.

It condemned the generalised repression and restriction of freedom of expression, assembly and demonstration, the outlawing of non-governmental organisations and civil society, the expulsion of international organisations from the country, the closure of and assaults against the media, the limitations on the right to information, the expulsion of students from universities, and the worsening situation in prisons and the use of inhuman treatment. It considered that such actions by the Government correspond to a planned strategy to destroy the political opposition that had led the protests last year. It was concerned about the enormous democratic, political and economic risks that the people and the country are facing, and urgently called for a meaningful internal dialogue with a view to achieving a sustainable and peaceful solution. Members stressed that any solution should render all those responsible for the violations accountable, and emphasized their full support for the reform of the judicial system and the electoral law.

Sanctions and suspension of Nicaragua from the Association Agreement

It requested that the European External Action Service and the Member States implement, without harming the domestic population, a staggered process of targeted and individual sanctions, such as visa bans and asset freezes, against the Government of Nicaragua and those individuals responsible for human rights breaches. It also urged that the democratic clause of the Association Agreement between the EU and Central America, of which Nicaragua is a signatory, be triggered by suspending Nicaragua from the agreement.

Parliament called on the Nicaraguan Government to implement three urgent measures as a sign of its willingness in the ongoing dialogue:

- the immediate and unconditional release of political prisoners;

- the immediate halt of all forms of repression against Nicaraguan citizens, including harassment, intimidation, spying and persecution of opposition leaders, and the subsequent elimination of all restrictions on freedoms;

- the restitution of the legal personality and goods of human rights organisations and the return of international organisations to the country.

In the latter regard, Parliament noted that the Government of Nicaragua has expelled from the country international organisations such as the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI) and the

Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI) that sought the peaceful resolution of the conflict and national reconciliation. It deplored this action and strongly condemned the persecution, arrest and intimidation of people cooperating with the UN and other international bodies.