Resolution on the anti-racism protests following the death of George Floyd

2020/2685(RSP) - 19/06/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 493 votes to 104, with 67 abstentions, a resolution on the anti-racism protests following the death of George Floyd.

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

‘Black Lives Matter’, said the European Parliament, which strongly condemned the horrific death of George Floyd in the US, asphyxiated by a white policeman when stopped by police in Minneapolis, as well as similar murders elsewhere in the world.

Strong condemnation of racism

Recalling that there was ‘no place for racism and discrimination in our societies’, Parliament called on the Commission, the European Council and the Council to take a strong and decisive stance against racism, violence and injustice in Europe.

Members called on the US government to take decisive action to combat racism and structural inequalities in the country, while condemning police action against US demonstrators and journalists and the US President's threat to deploy the military and his ‘inflammatory rhetoric’.

Use of force must be proportionate

Parliament condemned the acts of looting, arson, vandalism and destruction of public and private property perpetrated by some violent demonstrators, while calling on the European institutions and Member States to vigorously denounce the disproportionate use of force and racist tendencies in law enforcement, whenever this occurs throughout the world.

Noting that ‘the excessive use of force against crowds contravenes the principle of proportionality’, the resolution encouraged the competent authorities to ensure a transparent, impartial, independent and effective investigation into suspicions or allegations of disproportionate use of force.

Preventing racial profiling

Parliament condemned the racial and ethnic profiling used by the police and law enforcement agencies, considering that the police should set an example in the fight against racism and discrimination. It proposed action to strengthen the training of members of police forces in strategies to combat racism and discrimination and the establishment of a group of independent experts to draw up a European Code of Police Ethics. It also invited Member States to increase diversity within police forces and to develop frameworks for dialogue and cooperation between the police and the public.

Recognising past injustices

Members called on the EU institutions and Member States to officially recognise past injustices and crimes against humanity committed against black people, people of colour and the Roma. Declaring slavery a crime against humanity, the resolution called for 2 December to be designated ‘European Day for the Commemoration of the Abolition of the Slave Trade’ and encouraged Member States to include

the history of black people, people of colour and Roma in their school curricula. The crucial role of education in ending discrimination and structural racism was also stressed.

Comprehensive European Strategy

Parliament called on EU leaders to organise an EU anti-racism summit on combating structural discrimination in Europe. It called on the Commission to present a comprehensive strategy against racism and discrimination and an EU framework for national action plans against racism.

For its part, the Council was invited to set up a dedicated Council configuration for equality and to conclude negotiations on the Horizontal Directive on non-discrimination that has been blocked since the Commission proposed it in 2008.

Member States were called upon to promote anti-discrimination policies in all areas and to develop national action plans against racism addressing areas such as education, housing, health, employment, policing, social services, the justice system and political participation and representation, in close cooperation with civil society and the communities concerned.

Lastly, the resolution stressed that racist and xenophobic speech does not fall within the scope of freedom of expression. In this respect, it condemned all types of incidents of hate crime and hate speech, both online and offline, which occur in the EU on a daily basis and called on Member States to ensure that racist hate crimes are recorded, investigated, prosecuted and sanctioned.