Resolution on the ‘Foreign Agents’ Law in Nicaragua

2020/2814(RSP) - 08/10/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 609 votes to 21, with 64 abstentions, a resolution on the ‘Foreign Agents’ Law in Nicaragua.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled as a joint resolution by the EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA and ECR groups.

On 22 September 2020, President Daniel Ortega’s government, presented a proposal for a Law for Regulation of Foreign Agents, modelled on Russia’s 2012 law on foreign agents, which, if adopted, shall oblige every person, organisation or institution, including media outlets and non-governmental organisations that receive funds from abroad, to be registered with the Ministry of the Interior (Migob) and to submit to financial monitoring by the Financial Analysis Unit (UAF).

Any person or entity registered with the Ministry of the Interior as a ‘foreign agent’ shall be subject to close surveillance and shall ‘refrain from intervening in domestic political affairs or matters’, thereby restricting their civil and political rights, and allowing them to be persecuted, harassed and criminally prosecuted.

The Law for Regulation of Foreign Agents, if approved, would be used as an instrument of repression against people and human rights organisations that receive resources from international cooperation in Nicaragua.

It may directly impact EU cooperation in the country and individuals linked to European interests.

Members condemned the attempts to adopt the unconstitutional ‘Law for Regulation of Foreign Agents’, the ‘Special Law of Cyber Crime’ and the ‘Law Against Hate Crimes’, and called on the national assembly to reject these laws, as well as any other law that would limit the fundamental freedoms of the Nicaraguan people.

Parliament expressed its solidarity with the Nicaraguan people and condemned all the repressive actions of the Nicaraguan Government, in particular the deaths caused. It also expressed its dire concern over recent reports by Nicaraguan organisations that the authorities have ordered the national police to commit human rights violations and that they are being assisted in this repression by pro-government civilian groups and the ruling party’s territorial organisations, some of which are armed and organised as paramilitary groups.

Parliament requested that the Council quickly enlarge the list of individuals and entities to be sanctioned, including the President and Vice-President, taking special care not to harm the Nicaraguan people. It reiterated its urgent request for a global EU human rights mechanism and called on the Council to adopt this mechanism through a decision relating to the Union’s strategic interests and objectives under the Treaty on European Union.

It also called for a European Parliament delegation to be sent to Nicaragua as soon as possible in order to resume monitoring the situation in the country and urged the authorities to allow it unhindered entry and access to all interlocutors and facilities.