Resolution on the human rights situation in Vietnam, in particular the case of human rights journalists Pham Chi Dung, Nguyen Tuong Thuy and Le Huu Minh Tuan

2021/2507(RSP) - 21/01/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 592 votes to 32, with 58 abstentions, a resolution on the human rights situation in Vietnam, in particular the case of human rights journalists Pham Chi Dung, Nguyen Tuong Thuy and Le Huu Minh Tuan.

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

Vietnam currently holds in detention the largest number of political prisoners in Southeast Asia, including 170 prisoners of conscience, of whom 69 are being held solely for their social media activity.

On 5 January 2021, human rights defenders and journalists Pham Chi Dung, Nguyen Tuong Thuy and Le Huu Minh Tuan, members of the Independent Journalist Association of Vietnam (IJAVN), were sentenced to heavy prison terms of 15, 11 and 11 years respectively by the People's Court of Ho Chi Minh City for, among other charges, 'making, storing and spreading information, materials and items for the purpose of opposing the State'.

Parliament is appalled by and condemns the escalating crackdown on dissent and increasing violations of human rights in Vietnam. It called on all involved parties to make use of the existing EU-Vietnam agreements to improve the human rights situation in the country.

The Vietnamese authorities are called on to:

- immediately and unconditionally release Pham Chi Dung, Nguyen Tuong Thuy and Le Huu Minh Tuan and all other journalists, human rights and environmental defenders, trade unionists and prisoners of conscience detained and sentenced for merely exercising their right to freedom of expression, and to drop all charges against them;

- immediately cease other forms of harassment, including judicial harassment and intimidation of journalists, human rights and environmental defenders, activists and all individuals engaged in the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression and other human rights, both online and offline;

- end the censorship of independent news and media produced by both domestic and international news outlets, to cease restrictions on online information sources and internet usage, and to provide a safe space and enabling environment for journalists, citizen journalists, bloggers and others who express themselves online;

- remove all restrictions on freedom of religion and to put an end to the harassment of religious communities;

- revise the provisions of the Criminal Code of Vietnam which unduly restrict the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, and to amend the Law on Cybersecurity;

- recognise independent labour unions and to protect all workers, especially women and children, against discrimination, sexual harassment, violations of the legal overtime threshold, and breaches of safety and health obligations;

- introduce an immediate moratorium on the use of the death penalty, as a step towards abolition.

For its part, the EU should:

- set up an independent monitoring mechanism on human rights and an independent complaints mechanism, providing affected citizens and local stakeholders with effective recourse to remedy.

Lastly, the EEAS and the Commission should:

- swiftly carry out a comprehensive human rights impact assessment on what the EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement could mean for human rights, which is what Parliament asked for in its resolution on the ratification of the agreement;

- adopt an action plan to effectively address Vietnam's intensifying crackdown and its failure to abide by its human rights obligations, and for Parliament to be informed regularly on the implementation of that action plan.