EU-Malaysia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement

2022/0221M(NLE) - 25/05/2023 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted a report by Gheorghe-Vlad NISTOR (EPP, RO) containing a non-legislative motion for a resolution on the draft Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the Union, of the Framework Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Government of Malaysia, of the other part.

EU Strategy for the Indo-Pacific Region and EU Strategic Partnership with ASEAN

Noting that the Indo-Pacific region is of growing strategic importance to Europe, Members reiterated their support for the EU's strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region. They called for closer cooperation with the countries of the region, particularly the ASEAN countries.

Members welcomed the reaffirmation by EU and ASEAN leaders of their commitment to mutual respect for the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity enshrined in the UN Charter. They welcomed Malaysia's vote in favour of UN resolutions supporting Ukraine and encouraged Malaysia to promote respect for international law, assist Ukraine and take a firm stance against Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, including within the ASEAN framework.

EU-Malaysia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA)

Members believe that the PCA provides a solid legal framework for strengthening bilateral political and economic relations and for discussing issues of regional and global interest such as the promotion of democracy, human rights and international justice, the strengthening of the international framework for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the fight against terrorism and corruption, among others.

The report called on the EU to place issues relating to the **fight against climate change and the promotion of gender equality and women's rights** at the centre of its relations with Malaysia as part of the implementation of the PCA.

The Malaysian authorities are urged to amend discriminatory laws on nationality and citizenship, which violate women's human rights, and to adopt effective measures to combat discrimination against women in the workplace. The parties should work to support the implementation and enforcement of national legislation on corporate due diligence and accountability.

Members pointed out that Malaysia is facing increasing environmental degradation in many areas, including deforestation, loss of biodiversity and air and water pollution. They urged both parties to pay particular attention to these issues as part of their cooperation to combat these problems.

The report called for the strengthening of bilateral cooperation in the promotion and protection of **human rights**. It reiterated its call on the Malaysian authorities to repeal the excessively broad Sedition Act and to bring all laws into line with international standards on freedom of expression and assembly and the protection of human rights. It also called on the Malaysian authorities to repeal the National Security Council Act 2016, which grants extraordinary powers to this body as well as to the security forces.

The Malaysian government is invited to:

- ratify and implement the key international human rights conventions, as well as all core ILO conventions;

- crack down decisively on forced labour, including the abuse of domestic workers, and prohibit employers from keeping employees' passports without their consent;

- put in place a comprehensive system to protect and support all minority and indigenous groups in the country, respecting their fundamental rights, including religious freedom and cultural rights;

- immediately adopt a legal framework protecting the LGBTIQ+ community against discrimination;

- immediately stop forced expulsions and give the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees rapid access to migrant detention centres;

- maintain the official moratorium on all executions until the death penalty is fully abolished and all death sentences are commuted;

- meaningfully involve civil society, trade unions and human rights defenders in the implementation of the agreement.

The EU must promote, respect and protect international human rights standards, and in particular the principles of non-refoulement and voluntary return, in its cooperation with Malaysia in the field of migration.