Resolution on the shrinking space for civil society in Cambodia, in particular the case of the labour rights organisation CENTRAL

2024/2952(RSP) - 28/11/2024 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 492 votes to 5, with 102 abstentions, a resolution on the shrinking space for civil society in Cambodia, in particular the case of the labour rights organisation CENTRAL.

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

Parliament condemned the shrinking of the civic space in Cambodia and called for the immediate release of all political prisoners, activists, journalists, human rights defenders and other civil society actors held on politically motivated charges. It also called for the immediate cessation of all repression and harassment targeting civil society actors.

For their part, the Cambodian authorities are called on to:

- dismiss all politically motivated charges against Center for Alliance of Labour and Human Rights (CENTRAL) and its members, to halt politically motivated audits and smear campaigns, and to respect the role of civil society organisations;

- amend the Trade Union Law, the Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organisations (LANGO) and any other relevant legislation to align it with international human rights and labour standards, ensuring the protection of workers and civil society.

Companies operating in the EU that source from Cambodia are asked to conduct thorough human rights due diligence in their supply chains, ensuring responsible sourcing practices and leveraging their influence to promote and defend workers' rights.

Moreover, the Commission and the Member States are called on to assess changes to tariff preferences (under the Everything but Arms scheme) based on the Cambodian Government's non-cooperation on remedying and preventing human rights violations, as well as to send a clear message that improving human rights and safeguarding civil society freedoms are preconditions for economic cooperation, trade and investment.

Furthermore, the resolution called on the EU and the international community to take immediate and effective action, including targeted sanctions against those responsible for political repression, to exert pressure on the Cambodian Government until all political prisoners are released.

Lastly, Member States and the EEAS are called on to increase all forms of support, including financial support, for Cambodian civil society and provide protection for human rights defenders, civil society representatives and persecuted opposition members.