The free movement of football supporters and measures against holiganism

1995/2108(INI) - 21/05/1996 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Adopting the report by Mrs Claudia ROTH (V, D) on hooliganism and the free movement of football supporters by 285 votes to 152 with 21 abstentions, the European Parliament noted that football was part of our culture and an important social activity. It noted that sport, and football in particular, were activities in which millions of people had a keen interest and that this needed to be taken into account in national and Community policies. In this respect, cross-border acts of hooliganism and violence should be dealt with at Union level. While congratulating the Council of Europe on its Convention on the fight against violence during football matches, which the authorities, sporting federations and associations wished to implement, the European Parliament called for the following, as recommended in the Convention: . stadia designed to safeguard the safety of spectators (e.g. separate exits for supporters and access for police), . groups of supporters to be separated; . controlled ticket sales; . the installation of public address systems in stadia; . a ban inside stadia on alcoholic drinks, other dangerous objects and any form of symbol (banners etc.) with a racist content; . scanners at entrances to stadia. Parliament also considered that all-seating stadia were unnecessary and that stands should be provided for families (women and children). As far as social policy and prevention were concerned, Parliament supported the "fan projects" and the initiative taken as part of Euro 96 for a European supporters parliament ("Philosophy Football"). It called on the clubs, FIFA, UEFA and the Commission to provide financial support for this type of initiative by supporters. The Commission was also called upon to take action against clubs which only sold tickets as part of a travel package. Concerned at players' behaviour as a deciding factor in supporters' behaviour, it called for players to refuse to play during any racist or violent demonstration in the stadium and for a European day for fair play in sport to be organized and prizes to be awarded each year to a team, a sports personality and a supporters club in recognition of their sense of fair play. Initiatives to promote understanding should be organized together with fair play campaigns. With regard to the free movement of persons, the European Parliament considered that only persons whose previous behaviour was such that there was reason to believe that they represented a threat to public order should be punished. The nationality of a supporter could not, per se, constitute grounds for refusing that supporter leave to enter a match. Parliament considered that the fact that a match was being held could justify border controls but insisted that such controls be effected on the basis of common standards. In particular, it deplored the fact that, because of fundamental legal differences between Member States, persons found guilty of football-linked offences could not be prevented from attending matches in other Member States. As far as policing and the courts were concerned, the European Parliament called on the Member States to apply legislation which made provision for suitable punishment, such as a ban from stadia, and to ensure that guilty spectators were identified and judged in the country in which the offence was committed. It also supported greater police cooperation at international level and called on the authorities responsible to give police forces adequate training. It drew particular attention to clubs, calling for those which openly tolerated expressions of violence and racial hatred to be punished. Finally, it hoped that an article on the fight against racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia would be included when the TEU was revised. It called specifically for: . the Commission to draft an annual report on the impact of the measures taken to fight violence in sport; . research into the origins of hooliganism, the role of extremist organizations among supporters and the impact of the media; . the Council to notify it of action implemented by Member States as part of EURO 96; . the Council to draw up a convention on the fight against violence at football matches.