Middle-East peace process

1995/2097(INI) - 14/11/1996 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The report presented by Mr Luigi COLAJANNI (PSE, I), which was adopted by 318 votes to 44, with 22 abstentions, reflects the grave concern of the European Parliament for the blockage of the peace process. However, Parliament did welcome the resumption of negotiations and expressed the hope that this would lead to a rapid implementation of the Oslo Accords. It repeated the need for a just and lasting settlement to be reached, one which would satisfy the aspirations of Palestinians for a real homeland. The attitude of the Netanyahu Government was denounced, for the new Israeli policy was "not to recognize or apply the commitments entered into by the previous government". The Israeli army's failure to withdraw from Hebron, the new settlements in Palestinian territories, the opening of the tunnel under the mosques, the uncertain fate of Orient House and the closure of the territories' borders all seriously compromise Israeli-Palestinian relations and could well lead to a general decline in the situation. In the light of these developments the Israeli Government was urged to abandon this policy and to implement the Oslo Accords, since dialogue with the Palestinian Authority is the only way of achieving peace. In addition, with regard to the situation in the Palestinian territories, the report expressed concern about the recent deterioration in the human rights situation and the lack of progress towards democracy. It underlined that it was essential for the Palestinian Authority to commit itself to the development of democratic guarantees, individual rights, freedom of association and human rights. Faced with this situation, the Union's primary role of providing economic assistance must be backed up by a political initiative designed to strengthen Palestinian civil society. Parliament supported the appointment of a special envoy to the region and also favoured opening negotiations on a trade agreement between the EU and the Palestinian Authority. This would be replaced by an association agreement when the legal status of the Palestinian Authority permits. Lastly, Parliament took the view that the peace must be global, that is, it must also include Israel's neighbours. Negotiations with Syria must be resumed. Furthermore, Syria must reach agreement with Lebanon and there must be a withdrawal of foreign troops from Lebanon. The territorial integrity of Lebanon and the security of Israel must be respected. For its part, Iran was urged to bring pressure to bear on fundamentalist groups to ensure they do not impede the peace process.