Resolution on the conclusion of an association agreement with the Republic of Lebanon

2003/2503(RSP) - 16/01/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on Lebanon based on the draft by Elmar Brok (EPP-ED, Germany) and noted the proposal to conclude an Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement with Lebanon. (Please see AVC020083.)

Parliament emphasised that respect for human rights constitutes an essential element of the new Association Agreement. The Lebanese authorities should give positive signs in this direction by, inter alia, abolishing the death penalty, ratifying the UN Convention Against Torture, signing the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, setting clear limits to the competence of the military jurisdiction and settling the question of missing persons.

Parliament also expressed concern about the rights of expression and association and referred to the forced shut-down of the MTV television channel on 4 September 2002 and at the harassment of journalists who are critical of Lebanese authorities. Parliament pledged to cooperate with the Lebanese Parliament the establishment of procedures for a regular political dialogue also within the framework of Article 2 of the Association Agreement. The interparliamentary relations referred to in Article 5(2) of the agreement should especially take place within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly. Parliament also urges the parties to conclude a bilateral readmission agreement, such as the one referred to in Article 69 of the Association Agreement, which should also cover arrangements for the readmission of third-country nationals.

Parliament welcomed the withdrawal of part of the Syrian troops and asked for the Lebanese Parliament to consider Security Council Resolution 520/1982, and reach agreement on the withdrawal of all non-Lebanese troops, with full respect for Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence. It welcomed Lebanon's effort of solidarity regarding the temporary hosting of Palestinian refugees. The international community must increase its efforts in the region in relation to the problem of the Palestinian refugees. The EU and the Lebanese authorities must implement this new Association Agreement in a way that could also benefit the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian people living in difficult conditions in the country. Parliament called on the Lebanese authorities to ratify the Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees, to put an end to possible discrimination against refugee and asylum seekers, ensuring the protection of those subject to expulsion, and to facilitate the integration of those who wish to do so.

Finally, there was support for the programme of economic reforms undertaken by Prime Minister Hariri. Parliament called on Member States to take into consideration the problem faced by the Lebanese authorities of the country's enormous public debt.