Resolution on the 59th Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, 17 March to 25 April 2003

2003/2510(RSP) - 30/01/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament passed its resolution on the UN Commission on Human Rights. The EU must take a coordinated approach to the UNCHR 59th session so as to ensure an effective contribution to its proceedings. Parliament regretted that the development at the 58th UNCHR meeting of an increasingly marked north/south divide. Membership of the UNCHR must be dependent on criteria relating to the proven political will of the state to guarantee the protection of fundamental human rights. The chairperson of the UNCHR should be an exponent of human rights at the domestic and international level. Parliament deplored the election of Libya to chair the UNCHR this year and strongly regretted the EU Member States' abstention during the vote. It asked the EU to work for the universal ratification of the main human rights instruments available to countries, and listed them. The Council Presidency should sponsor or co-sponsor a resolution to strengthen the special procedures of the UNCHR, including through allocating adequate resources. The EU should also promote the creation of a 'Democracy Caucus' at the UNCHR, where all the countries belonging to the 'Community of Democracies' could meet in order to determine a common position on the basis of the UNCHR's agenda. Parliament went on to ask the Council Presidency to sponsor a resolution at the 59th Session of the UNCHR appealing to all UN members to ratify or accede to the Rome Statute setting up the ICC, as well as a resolution inviting all states to completely abolish the death penalty. The Council Presidency was asked to sponsor a resolution calling on the US immediately to clarify the situation of prisoners in Guantanamo or those recently transferred from there to other parts of the US and to release those against whom there are no retainable charges. Parliament also called for resolution against: - China, addressing the situation in Tibet and Xinjiang; - Russia, particularly on the situation in Chechnya; - Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, the human rights situation in the Israeli Occupied Territories and in the area under the Palestinian Authority, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, the Central African Republic, C·te d'Ivoire, Sudan, Cuba, Colombia, North Korea, Burma and Nepal. Finally, the Council and the Commission are asked to report back to Parliament in plenary session on the outcome of the UNCHR no later than May 2003. The report should include not only the issues on which the EU and its Member States sponsored resolutions and the range of actions taken by the EU during the UNCHR session, but also when and why such sponsoring was not undertaken.