Resolution on the progress made in 1999 in the implementation of the area of freedom, security and justice

1999/2005(RSP) - 15/02/2000 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted the resolution tabled by Mrs. Anna Terron I Cusi (PES, E) on the progress made in 1999 in the implementation of the area of freedom, security and justice (AFSJ) provided for in Article 2, fourth indent, of the Treaty on European Union. The European Parliament regrets that the annual debate on the progress made in implementing the AFSJ is taking place when the Council has failed to produce a written report and send it in advance to the Parliament. It calls on the national and European institutions to place democratisation of the AFSJ on the agenda for the forthcoming IGC with a view to conferring powers of co-decision on Parliament and powers of judicial review on the Court of Justice. The European Parliament calls on the Commission, pending the future Charter of Fundamental Rights, to take more decisive steps as regards: - free movement of persons (former 'Monti package') on the basis of the 'Schengen acquis' now forming part of Union law; - recognition of an appropriate status and rights of movement and establishment for third-country nationals legally resident on Union territory. On immigration and asylum, the resolution welcomes the priority to be given by the Portuguese Presidency in this regard, and calls for the provisions of the Dublin Convention on Extradition to be brought under the first pillar. There is also a call for measures to establish a common asylum procedure based on fair sharing of the burdens and costs of housing refugees. MEPs also want the Council to adopt various proposals on the table in this area. Furthermore, the European Parliament calls on the Commission in drawing up its forthcoming proposal on access to documents to maximise freedom of information. The Council is also called upon to end the practice of secrecy when acting in its legislative capacity. Moreover, the EP calls for an agreement within the Union on the proposal for a Refugee Fund and expresses preference for EU funding in the event of a mass influx of refugees for temporary protection. It also stresses that any temporary protection regime should be exceptional and implemented only in emergency situations of sudden mass influx, as clearly defined in consultation with international bodies, including the UNHCR. In addition, the Commission is called upon to introduce, before the end of June 2000, measures designed to ensure consular protection of Union citizens abroad (Article 20, EC Treaty). With regard to the Member States, the European Parliament calls for co-operation between the Member States in preventing crime and spreading best practice by developing coherent action within the United Nations and the Council of Europe. It also asks to be associated with the conclusion of conventions on measures to combat organised crime (UN) and cyber-crime. The EP also considers that co-operation between the Member States and the police authorities must be increased and strengthened, particularly with regard to cross-border crime such as organised illegal immigration, terrorism, money laundering or trafficking in drugs. In conclusion, the EP calls on the Member States to press, at the next intergovernmental conference, for wider-ranging rights of co-decision for Parliament and tighter parliamentary control in the sphere of AFSJ policies, since these are the only way of securing acceptance of the AFSJ objective among the European citizens.