Resolution on the 60th session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, 15 March to 23 April 2004

2004/2510(RSP) - 10/02/2004 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by Elmar BROK (EPP-ED, Germany) on the EU's rights, priorities and recommendations for the 60th Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva. Parliament welcomed the work done by the EU in favour of the universal ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and called on the Union to continue its work. The European Parliament stated its concern at the fact that the value of the UN Commission on Human Rights risks being substantially diminished by its regrettable tendency to become highly politicized. Debates and resolutions in previous years did not reflect the human rights situation but rather the mobilisation of support for countries that were accused of human rights violations. No-action motions against resolutions often succeeded, following high-profile campaigns by the countries concerned. Parliament urged that all the necessary reform measures be taken to reverse this politicisation and maintain the credibility of this important forum. In addition: -as a prerequisite for membership of the UNCHR, governments should be required to ratify core human rights treaties; -they should also have complied with their reporting obligations, issued open invitations to the UN human rights experts and not have been condemned by the UNCHR for human rights violations; -the Presidency and the Member States should sponsor a resolution to strengthen the special procedures of the UNCHR, including through allocating adequate resources to assist their effective functioning. Parliament went on to call for the following initiative within the UNHCR: -on the extremely serious situation regarding the rule of law in Russia, as highlighted by the Russian authorities' alarming attitude towards Mr. Khodorkovsky and other persons accused in the Yukos affair and all the abuses committed during legal proceedings; -the extremely serious situation in the Palestinian territories, in order to achieve a just solution to the conflict and bring to an end the occupation, the repression and the building of the wall in violation of international law; Parliament called on the EU, while taking due account of the fact that the following list is not exhaustive and that circumstances differ substantially from country to country, to sponsor resolutions on around 30 countries or regions where human rights are not respected. These include including China, North Korea, Iran, Pakistan, India, Indonesia, Iraq, the occupied territories and the area under the control of the Palestinian Authority, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Chechnya, Colombia, Cuba, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zimbabwe, Sudan and Belarus. Furthermore, the EU arms embargo on China must be firmly maintained. Parliament stated that the EU has so far lacked the political will to manage the initiative in favour of a universal moratorium on executions at the UN General Assembly. Such inappropriate behaviour only serves to weaken the position of the EU as a whole. Parliament went on to call on the US to clarify the situation of the prisoners in Guantßnamo and consequently either to put them on trial or to release them. An independent UN monitoringmechanism should be established in order to monitor the human rights impact of counter-terrorism measures in all countries. The EU should also sponsor the following resolutions: -calling on the US to guarantee a trial for Saddam Hussein which respects international judicial standards of openness and fairness, such as by an internationally led tribunal; -on the situation of the Dalits, as well as on the dowry-related murder of women in Asia; -in favour of the Brazilian initiative on discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. The Council and the Commission are asked to report back in full to Parliament in plenary session on the outcome of the UNCHR no later than May 2004. Their report should detail 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 why such sponsoring was not undertaken.