Resolution on reinvigorating actions on human rights and democratisation with Mediterranean partners

2004/2513(RSP) - 12/02/2004 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution welcoming the Commission's Communication on Communication on reinvigorating EU actions on human rights and democratization with Mediterranean partners. It expressed its support for its ten priority actions and asked the Commission to produce an annual report on their implementation. It maintained that civil society should be given a central role in the partnership with the Mediterranean countries and call for the implementation of policies aimed at creating a rich social fabric. Parliament stated that there should be a mid-term review of Article 2 of all association agreements with Mediterranean countries in order to evaluate whether respect for human right particularly women's rights, and democratic principles are fully implemented. It called for the introduction of specific mechanisms to enable the human rights clauses included in the Euro-Mediterranean association agreements to be applied more effectively and efficiently. Parliament went on to state that the EIDHR can only work within the framework of an overall EU human rights and democratization policy. The EIDHR should continue to be systematically and flexibly applied in the Wider Middle East and the neighbouring countries in Wider Europe, in particular given the increase of EUR 17.5 million in funds voted by Parliament in the 2004 budget. The purpose, inter alia, is to encourage the process of acting on the 'Sana'a Declaration', and in other countries where host government consent is impossible. The EIDHR should now be used within the Wider Europe-Neighbourhood strategy as it was in the context of the Copenhagen political criteria for the accession countries - as part of the measuring mechanism for compliance with human rights and democracy criteria. These are the 'essential elements' clause in third-country agreements. The funds available under MEDA for supporting democratisation, good governance and civil society activities, which, at EUR 477 million, are much greater than the EUR 7 million of EIDHR funds, should be fully used and should complement the EIDHR activities. Parliament wanted specific programmes to be developed to promote participation by women in social and political life. Parliament went on to note that the Tunisian authorities are continuing to block funding for projects approved in the framework of the EIDHR which benefit independent NGOs, including the Tunisian Human Rights League. It deplored the fact that this government also prevented several representatives of civil society from taking part in the Sana'a Conference. Finally, Parliament requested that the new Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly become an active participant in the debate on follow-up of the EIDHR. It called on its delegation to the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly to find ways to address the question of democracy and human rights in the region at the next meetings of this assembly.