European year against racism in 1997: implementation. Report

1999/2205(COS) - 16/03/2000 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted its resolution on countering racism in the EU drafted by Ms. Sarah LUDFORD (ELDR, UK). The resolution urges, among other things: - Member States to be sensitive to the needs of minority communities and encourage their community structures while providing full integration programmes and mainstreaming the needs of ethnic minorities into policy and practice; - EU institutions and governments to provide and disseminate accessible information in minority languages on public services, complaint and redress channels and legal advice services; - the Member States' authorities to strengthen awareness-raising and racial diversity among all sections of the population, and in respect of young people to include as formal requirements of school curricula and teacher training programmes the teaching of Europe in the world (including slavery and colonialism and the history and culture of minority communities) and the dangers of racism, xenophobia and intolerance (including the Shoah and anti-semitism) and the imperative of racial tolerance and the value of diversity; - Member States and local authorities to take action specifically to encourage all ethnic minority voters to register and turn out to vote, and political parties to take positive action to encourage the selection and election of ethnic minority candidates; - Member States to prosecute and punish vigorously the commission of racist crime, racial harrassment and racial attacks; - both business and public sector organisations to recognise the case for race equality on grounds of financial efficiency, as well as moral imperative, and thus to regard European legislation against race discrimination as a positive spur to the adoption of a diversity strategy including setting of targets and positive action for recruitment and promotion; - the EU and Member States to practice an ethical foreign policy by taking all opportunities to tackle poverty and ensure respect for human rights, and sepcifically by tightening the EU Code of Conduct on arms sales; - the EU not to tie bilateral and multilateral agreements with third countries, including Lomé, to demands for the acceptance without question of those deported from the EU. The resolution also calls: - for the forthcoming EU Charter of Fundamental Rights to be more than merely declaratory of existing rights and to enshrine guarantees, including against racial discrimination, which are enforceable in the European Court of Justice; - on media organisations to establish a code of ethics to combat racism and xenophobia and to monitor compliance with it; - for European law to allow, and require, 'contract compliance' whereby external contracts and funding agreements must include an obligation to implement equal opportunities policies; - for early EU legislation to give substance to European citizenship by granting rights to vote in local and European elections to third-country nationals resident in the EU for 5 years or more; - on the Member States and Community institutions to ensure that rules restricting freedom of opinion and expression are not contrary or disproportionate to national, European and international rules on the subject; - on the EU and its Member States to ensure that, within a single asylum system, the Refugees Convention is fully applied and that immigration legislation and policy does not discriminate on grounds of ethnic or national origin, avoids stoking xenophobic attitudes or discriminatory and hostile behaviour to ethnic minorities, and gives similar rights of free movement and family unity to third-country national as to Member State citizens; - in particular, for the promotion of dialogue with Islamic countries which will, inter alia, facilitate the integration of Muslim communities in Europe. In the context of fundamental rights and equality policy, the Parliament insists that the protection of the minority rights of minorities must be ensured within a system of politically devolved government. The EP requests that the European Monitoring Centre shpould have its competences extended to third pillar matters and play a more pro-active role in mainstreaming education and promoting good practice. Lastly, the Parliament calls on the Member States to: - train their police forces and judiciary in awareness of racism and xenophobia, and in international human rights standards, race sensitivity and communication with minorities; - achieve a police force representative of the ethnic balance in society by recruiting an increased number of police from ethnic minority groups; - increase police accountability and provide for independent investigation of complaints of racist ill-treatment or bias; - agree that the Directive under Article 13 implementing race

equality should apply to the police, prosecution, judicial and immigration services including the combating of indirect or institutional racism.