Human rights and democratisation: role of the Union in third countries

2001/2276(COS) - 25/04/2002 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on a draft by its rapporteur Rosa DIEZ GONZALEZ (PES, Spain) on human rights and democratisation in third countries. (Please refer to the document dated 19/03/02). Parliament pointed out that the reduction of poverty, the main objective of the EU's new development policy, requires the existence of genuine participatory democracy and responsible, corruption-free government. In many former colonies of European countries, the influence of colonial powers has not encouraged, and has even hindered, human rights and good governance. The EU can make a crucial contribution to eliminating the exclusive aspects of globalisation and giving it a focus based on inclusion of the least favoured social groups and the poorest countries. Whilst Parliament welcomed the Commission's Communication, it regretted the absence of specific proposals to encourage consistency in the work of the various Community institutions and end the almost total dependence on the political will of the Council, reflected in the frequent requirement for unanimity in decision-making. It called on the Convention on the Future of Europe to put forward firm proposals to this end. Demands regarding democratisation and respect for human rights placed on partner countries should in all circumstances take precedence over any legitimate economic, commercial and any other interests of the EU and its Member States. Parliament expands on the principles to be applied to the interinstituitonal code of conduct. It also supports the establishment of an EU Agency for Human Rights and Democracy, as proposed in the conclusions of the Cologne European Council. This agency would draw up a global overview of the human rights situation by country. Before the signing of any accession, association or cooperation agreement with a third country, the Commission should draw up a report on the human rights situation in that country, with a recommendation on whether or not negotiations should be completed. The Council and the Parliament should be required to give an opinion on this recommendation, with the approval of both institutions being required for the agreement to be signed.