Resolution on the preparation of the European Council in Seville, 21 and 22 June 2002

2002/2558(RSP) - 13/06/2002 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

Members of the European Parliament voted 341 to 64 with 42 abstentions in favour of a resolution setting out Parliament's priorities for the European Council in Seville. On Council reform, it welcomed the intention to refocus European Council meetings on their essential function of political orientation and strategy. The Council was asked to restore the Community method in the decision-making process. The Council should hold its meetings in public. Members stressed that the proposals in Seville should in no way interfere with the work of the European Convention. Parliament expressed its concern about the prospect of the unilateral and exclusive abolition of some of the Councils. It felt that Parliament, as one arm of the budgetary authority, should be consulted on/involved in any reform. In order that the legislative process become more transparent and efficient, there should be an interinstitutional working group on better lawmaking composed of political representatives of the Council, Parliament and the Commission. Turning to economic policy, Parliament regretted that it is still not fully involved in the development and implementation of the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines. It also pointed out that reference to the environmental dimension of sustainability is lacking in the country-specific economic policy guidelines. Member States are asked to abide by the Growth and Stability Pact. Parliament went on to say that the integration of European networks and the opening-up of public services markets must respect the principles of territorial and social cohesion. On asylum and immigration, Members felt that the biggest factor slowing progress towards the establishment of a common European immigration and asylum policy has been the Council itself. The Spanish Presidency is asked to maintain a balance between purely restrictive measures and legislation supporting the integration of third-country nationals admitted to the Member States as well as measures to combat discrimination. Parliament felt that depriving countries of aid is likely to increase migratory pressure. It is inappropriate to reward some countries or deprive others of EU development aid on the grounds of the way that migration has been handled. On sustainable development, there is concern at the lack of agreement at the Bali conference. The Johannesburg summit should develop specific initiatives, especially concerning a global water strategy. There is a need to take full account in the various economic sectors of the limits of natural resources, which should be managed, used and conserved in a sustainable way and shared equitably. On enlargement, Parliament urged the Member States to find a satisfactory agreement on the common position for the chapters on agriculture, regional policy and budgetary issues. On the question of defence and relations with NATO, Parliament supported the agreement on the use of NATO assets by the EU and called on the Council to define its negotiating mandate on the EU's precise relations with NATO. The ESDP should be made operational at both institutional and capability level, and should be under the proper democratic scrutiny of both the European and national parliaments as soon as possible. On international affairs, Parliament supported closer relations with Russia and called for a stronger commitment to deal with such issues as Chechnya and Kalingrad. Russia is urged to set a timetable for the ratification of the Kyoto protocol. Whilst bothIndia and Pakistan are urged to decrease tensions in the area, there is a specific call on President Musharaff to take further steps to eradicate terrorist activities carried out from Pakistan, especially to stop infiltration of terrorists across the Line of Control into Jammu and Kashmir. There should be a resumption of bilateral talks on the Kashmir question. Parliament underlined the need to strengthen moderate forces in Kashmir to help develop a stronger civil society. On the Middle East, there is support from Members for the Saudi initiative. Parliament insisted on the need for international monitoring of the implementation of any agreements. It went on to emphasise the importance of a unified structure for the Palestinian security forces and of free elections to the Palestinian Legislative council and the Presidency of the Palestinian Authority. There is support for the International Criminal court, with Parliament regretting the US Senate bill which allows the use of force by the US to prevent its citizens being tried by the ICC.