Annual report on human rights in the world in 2002 and European Union's human rights policy

2002/2011(INI) - 04/09/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report by Bob van den BOS (ELDR, Netherlands) on EU human rights policy. (Please see the summary of 08/07/03.) Human rights are the cornerstone of all internal and external policies of the EU. Parliament asked the Council and the Commission to speak out clearly against violations of human rights wherever they take place. It expressed its strong concern about a possible marginalisation of human rights vis--vis security-related, economic and political priorities. Parliament strongly supports the Council's intention to achieve a more effective and visible EU human rights and democratisation policy through increased coherence and consistency between Community action and the CFSP, mainstreaming, greater openness and regular identification and the review of priority action. On the matter of the human rights clause in cooperation agreements, Parliament asked the Commission and the Council to apply the restrictive and suspensive measures on the basis of a less lenient assessment of the seriousness of the situation. The Council and the Commission should effectively implement restrictive measures adopted by the EU, so that they do not remain mere expressions of disapproval. EU sanction policies must be applied in furtherance of human rights. Actions should not taken which deliberately undermine such policies, as in the case of Zimbabwe where the impact of targeted sanctions has been regularly undermined because of loopholes. Parliament called for a periodic review of sanction policies in order to assess and enhance their effectiveness. On concrete violations of human rights, the House mentioned amongst many other the use of stoning and all forms of degrading and cruel punishment, notably in Iran, Nigeria and Saudi Arabia. It noted the de facto moratorium on the imposition of sentences to death by stoning in Iran and urged the Iranian Government definitively to abolish this practice. The EU must continue to work towards the universal abolition of the death penalty. Parliament strongly condemned the attack on the UN headquarters in Baghdad on 19 August 2003, which killed 20 people including the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights and UN Special Representative in Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello. It emphasised that this constitutes a war crime and that those responsible must be identified and brought to justice.