# Violation of women's rights and Union international relations

2002/2286(INI) - 19/11/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament has adopted the non-binding resolution by Mrs Miet SMET (EPP-Ed, B) on the violation of women's rights and EU international relations. It welcomes the communication from the Commission on the programme of action for the mainstreaming of gender equality in Community Development Cooperation , while stressing the need for a more straightforward and pressing action to fight violence against women. Parliament urges Member States : - to fully support all present and future EU measures aiming to combat violence against women, at all levels of negotiation and implementation, within bilateral and multilateral agreements; - to pass legislation - or to ensure that existing legislation is more strictly complied with prohibiting and imposing penalties for genital mutilation in their own country, and at the same time to develop national prevention programmes in order to ultimately eradicate the practice of genital mutilation. In addition, the Parliament : - stresses the need for a comprehensive definition of violence, whether private or public, along the lines provided by the CEDAW (1979 UN Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women); - urges the Council and the Commission to include in future trade and development agreements, irrespective of, and in addition to, the clause for the respect of human rights, a specific clause providing for the imposition of sanctions and, ultimately, the suspension of the agreement in cases of serious and repeated violations of women's rights (meaning widespread episodes of violence such as genital mutilation, mutilation with acid, public castigation, burning, blood feuds, stoning, raping and trafficking in women, murders of honour, forced marriages and slavery); - considers that sanctions or the suspension of the agreement should be enacted in cases where, despite evidence of expanding and serious violence against women, the partner country's government systematically refrains from positively reacting to these phenomena at legislative, administrative and judicial level; points out that in any event, the impact of sanctions or suspension of the agreement on the population, and in particular on children and women, should be carefully studied and evaluated; - asks the Commission to involve in its actions local women's organisations from partner countries active in the fight against violence to women; - invites the Commission to establish favourable or unfavourable trade terms for partner countries according to their record for fighting violence against women, as well as to establish incentives for partner countries according to their achievements in the fields of democratisation and the rule of law; - calls upon the Commission and the Member States to ensure that their development-aid programmes include projects specifically designed to combat violence against women and to promote female emancipation; similarly, calls upon the Commission and the Member States to tailor a significant percentage of their aid projects exclusively to women and to women's welfare and development; emphasises the need to ensure that such projects include active participation by local women; - urges the Commission to take into account the status andprogression of women's situation in the economic, legal, social and cultural fields (in particular the stage reached in the ratification of the CEDAW and the Additional Protocol thereto) and to initiate discussion with partner countries on certain sensitive areas such as discriminatory provisions in family law and criminal law, domestic violence, discrimination in access to health and education services and legal aid. It also underlines the necessity to adequately use existing EU funds to finance positive actions in countries where strong imbalances of power between the sexes inhibit women's emancipation, participation in society and education, thus putting women at special risk of violence; - calls upon the Member States, when considering applications for, and possible recognition of, refugee status, to take into account persecution and/or the fear of persecution which may be suffered by women on account of their sex; - stresses the need to fully include issues of violence against women and to impress upon the Iranian Government the importance of ratifying the CEDAW in the current negotiations on the conclusion of a trade and cooperation agreement; - suggests the establishment of permanent contacts through Commission delegations with the relevant local, national and international institutions and NGOs working in partner countries; - calls for the participation by women to be made an integral part of the process of concluding

agreements with third countries; - encourages the Commission to train and recruit personnel with expertise in the field of gender theories and mainstreaming, enabling the Commission to provide data desegregated by gender in Country and Regional Strategy Papers, to coordinate EU action to combat violence against women when necessary and to evaluate its impact. The Parliament appeals to the governments of the partner countries to: - show the necessary political will and step up the legal, administrative and other reforms to establish the equality of men and women in law and to incorporate gender equality into all their policies; - develop information campaigns and policies to combat violence against women. The Commission is asked to raise issues relating to violence against women in all relevant international contexts, conferences and organisations, such as G8 meetings and WTO rounds, and to accordingly propose anti-violence measures and clauses in multilateral agreements. The Member States and the Commission to take concrete and coordinated action against women trafficking in Europe in cooperation with EUROPOL, INTERPOL and EUROJUST.