Resolution on the World Conference against Racism in Durban

2001/2602(RSP) - 03/10/2001 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament voted 394 to 32 with 19 abstentions in favour of a resolution reached by the World Conference convened in Durban on 8 September 2001. The resolution recognised the difficulties in reaching an agreement in view of the dispute over reparations for victims of slavery in the Middle East. Nevertheless, Parliament sees the conference as representing a step forward towards the elimination of all forms of present-day racism and xenophobia. There is also a welcome for the recognition that Zionism is not racism. The role of the Belgian Presidency in steering the Conference towards an acceptable compromise is also recognised. At the same time, there is a criticism for the NGO Forum, convened prior to the Conference promoting demands that were unacceptable to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. In this sense, MEPs are looking for better preparation for such conference in the future. The resolution also supports the 'New Africa Initiative' to promote democracy and calls for an examination of ways in which the EU can use its influence in shaping the future of international human rights issues and anti-discrimination work. There is also welcome for the recognition by the Conference of the 'evil of slavery and slave trade practices, which would, if committed today be considered crimes against humanity'. Moreover, the resolution also welcomes the fact that discrimiation against the Roma and Sinti people has now been recognised but regrets the fact that the final declaration did not include a reference to EU funds for the Conference were spent, in view of the fact that the EU allocated some EUR 3.7 million to support the participation of NGOs and low income countries in preparatory conferences. Lastly, the resolution urges the EU to encourage actions to combat intolerance, including Islamophobia and anti-Semitism.