Resolution on the results of the informal European Council meeting in Ghent on 19 October 2001

2001/2615(RSP) - 25/10/2001 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament voted 338 to 90 with 44 abstentions in favour of a resolution expressing solidarity with the American people following the terrorist attacks in the USA. The resolution supports US objectives of combating terrorism, and 'considers that the military action has been taken within the framework of UN Security Council Resolution 1368. It goes to request that military action should be within the confines of this UN Security Council Resolution and should be proportionate. There is support for the development of the CFSP and the ESDP and the creation of the EU's European Rapid Reaction Force. MEPs are hoping that a firm decision on this can be reached at the Laeken Summit. There is further support for a request that the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, ensures conditions guaranteeing humanitarian aid gets to the Afghan people are fulfilled and for the creation of EU policy guidelines towards Afghanistan resulting from the recent General Affairs Council meeting. The Parliament also calls for the involvement and respect of Afghan women in a new government and for the 'immediate withdrawal' of Israeli troops. The resolution goes on to condemn the assassination of the Israeli Minister for Tourism and welcomes the support of US President, George Bush, for a Palestinian State. The UN is called upon to work with specialist agencies in the Middle East with a view to reducing the suffering of the civilian population, including the implementation of the 'oil for food' programme in Iraq. There is further support for the operations taking place under the EU Action Plan to combat terrorism, coupled with a message to Council to reach agreement on the 6-7 December on a European arrest and warrant scheme. The resolution also addresses the Laeken Summit and the planned convening of a Convention to look at ways at reforming the EU. It emphasises the importance of balanced representation and the Convention coming up with a single proposal to form the basis of negotiations at the next IGC. On enlargement, the resolution calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that negotiations proceed on the basis that no country should have priority and similarly that no country should be able to hold others to hostage in the negotiations. Concern is also expressed in the resolution over the possibility of price rises during the changeover to the euro. It also expresses support for banks in the eurozone to be open on 1 January 2002 and for cash machines to be loaded with small euro denomination notes as well as welcoming the European Council's commitment to reducing the costs of cross-border transfers. Finally, MEPs are critical of the Belgian presidency's announcement of a list including the candidate countries which will be among the first to accede.