Resolution on harassment of minorities in Vojvodina in Serbia and Montenegro

2004/2582(RSP) - 16/09/2004 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the harassment of minorities in Vojvodina.

The resolution had been tabled by the PES, GUE/NGL, Greens/ALE, EPP-ED, ALDE, IND/DEM and UEN groups.

It refers to the repeated harassment of minorities in Vojvodina, and in particular of the Hungarian minority, in recent months, and expresses deep concern at the repeated breaches of human rights in the province of Vojvodina. Parliament pronounced that it is aware of the fact that there has been recent proof of ongoing violence against Serb citizens of Hungarian ethnic origin, which has occurred in several towns in the province of Vojvodina, such as desecration of tombstones in many towns, a proliferation of anti-Hungarian graffiti, burning of the national flag of Hungary, and physical aggression by the police against a mayor representing the Hungarian minority. It calls upon the authorities in Serbia and the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro to acknowledge these violent acts as criminal acts according to the legislation in force and insists on the importance of immediate and effective action, so that similar events are not left unremedied and are prevented in the future.

Deeply concerned at the fact that the Serb authorities mostly turn a blind eye to the violence, often treating it as vandalism and refusing to accept a nationalist or sectarian motive, Parliament reminds the Governments of the Republic of Serbia and the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro that observance of the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human and minority rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law is one of the basic principles of the Stabilisation and Association Process and a prerequisite for their future relationship with the EU, including orderly relations with all their neighbours.

Members invite the Conference of Presidents to authorise its Delegation for relations with Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Serbia and Montenegro (including Kosovo) to send a fact-finding mission to the province and to report back to the Foreign Affairs Committee and its Subcommittee on Human Rights, with regard to further action to be taken. They also want the Council and the Commission also to monitor closely developments in Vojvodina and to use the EU's political leverage to raise this issue with all authorities in the Republic of Serbia and the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro.

Lastly, Parliament calls on the Regional Assembly of Vojvodina urgently to address these issues and to establish a political climate that assists in addressing the concerns and aspirations of all citizens and ensuring safety and the rule of law in the region.