Resolution on the political situation in Belarus after the parliamentary elections and referendum of 17 October 2004

2004/2593(RSP) - 28/10/2004 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted by 449 votes to 20 with 22 abstentions a resolution on the political situation in Belarus after the parliamentary elections and referendum of 17 October 2004.

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

It stresses that the parliamentary elections and referendum failed to meet international standards for democratic elections and therefore **cannot be considered free and fair**. Accordingly, Parliament believes that the parliament elected in Belarus does not possess a true democratic mandate to represent the Belarussian people, and it does not recognise the legitimacy of the referendum. Members do not believe that President Aleksander Lukashenko has a constitutional basis on which to stand as a candidate in the elections of 2006.

They strongly condemn the violent attacks committed by the Belarussian regime against students, leading opposition figures and journalists following peaceful political demonstrations in Minsk, and urge the Belarussian authorities immediately to release all those who were detained after these demonstrations.

Parliament expresses its conviction that the policy of the European Union towards Belarus after the referendum and the elections must be urgently reviewed in the light of these events and that appropriate changes must be implemented. It calls on the Commission, the Council and the governments of the Member States, as appropriate:

- to continue and wherever possible to reinforce their policy of isolation of President Lukashenko and the members of his regime until clear steps are taken which demonstrate their willingness to respect democratic values and the rule of law;
- to draw up an Action Plan for further ways to increase - together with other democratic countries and international institutions - support for all remaining democratic forces in Belarus and to assist more effectively those people in Belarussian civil society working for democratic change in Belarus, by reconsidering the EU financial instruments for that country;
- urgently to investigate the possibility of supporting neutral broadcasting to the citizens of Belarus and the creation of a special educational programme which would grant scholarships for young people and students from Belarus who would like to study in the European Union, and financial support for academic institutions that are prepared to host students from Belarus;
- to decide on a set of targeted sanctions against members of the Belarussian regime, including an expansion of the visa prohibition regulation for the authorities of Belarus, including those responsible for the serious election violations, together with increased material support through humanitarian and economic aid to the municipalities which oppose the regime.