Resolution on the European Union's priorities and recommendations for the 61st session of the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, 14 March to 22 April 2005

2004/2619(RSP) - 24/02/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted the resolution on the EU's priorities and recommendations for the 61st session of the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva (14 March to 22 April 2005).

Parliament calls on the Presidency to sponsor or co-sponsor resolutions on:

- civil and political rights: protection of human rights in the fight against terrorism; racism; the question of the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in any part of the world; the questions of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, freedom of expression, the independence of the judiciary, impunity and religious intolerance; the rights of the child, with an emphasis on full implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and particularly the dramatic plight of children in armed conflicts and violence against children; the rights of women and girls need for protection against the use of rape as a 'tool of war' in conflict situations; the right to reproductive health; migrant workers, minorities and displaced persons; indigenous peoples; disappearances and summary executions; human rights defenders; freedom of the press and protection of journalists; protection of internally displaced persons; modern forms of slavery (namely in the field of child labour, trafficking in people and trafficking in human organs); and discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity; and the responsibilities of transnational corporations and related business enterprises with regard to human rights;

- economic, social and cultural rights: the right to development; the right to food; extreme poverty; the Additional Protocol to the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; businesses and human rights; and disability, race, age and religion;

Parliament calls on the EU and its Member States to take all the necessary measures to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, especially those of eradicating poverty, widespread hunger, gender inequality, environmental deterioration and lack of education, health care and clean water.

Parliament calls on the UNCHR to adopt, as a matter of priority, a draft convention on the protection of all persons from enforced disappearance and urges the Council and all governments of Member States to support both working groups, with a view to early adoption of the convention by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

As regards the death penalty, Parliament calls on the Commission, the Council, the Presidency and the Member States to do their utmost to ensure that the UN General Assembly adopts at its next session a resolution establishing a worldwide moratorium on capital executions as a first step towards the universal abolition of the death penalty.

The Presidency is called upon to sponsor a resolution calling on the US to immediately clarify the situation of the prisoners in Guantánamo and in other locations i n respect of international human rights standards and humanitarian law, and recalls its positions on the dramatic situation of the prisoners in Guantánamo, reiterated through several resolutions.

Parliament calls on the Presidency to make efforts to progress towards the creation of an 'International Arms Exports Treaty', taking note of Parliament's resolution of 17 November 2004 on the Council's Fifth Annual Report according to Operative Provision 8 of the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports.

On the efficient functioning of human rights instruments and mechanisms, Parliament calls on the Council and the Commission to work towards the universal ratification of all human rights instruments. The Commission is called upon to provide for sufficient budgetary funds in order to ensure the promotion and follow-up of the Sana'a process.

Parliament condemned the intended lifting of the EU arms sales embargo against China by adopting an amendment to a resolution on the upcoming meeting of the UN Human Rights Committee. MEPs also condemned the Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe.

In other amendments, MEPs advocated the "right to reproductive health"; stressed the "responsibilities of transnational corporations and related business enterprises with regard to human rights"; called for the appointment of a UN special rapporteur on Nepal; and called for new standards for ensuring that the rights and fundamental freedoms of journalists in areas of conflict are fully respected.

Lastly, as regards the preparation and follow-up of the 61st session of the UNCHR, Parliament reaffirms the need for a coordinated, concerted and well prepared approach on the part of the European Union prior to, during and after the 61st UNCHR session so as to ensure an efficient and effective contribution to its proceedings. An ad hoc delegation of Members of the European Parliament to attend the 61st session of the UNCHR should be established. The Council and the Commission are asked to report back in full to Parliament in plenary session on the outcome of the UNCHR no later than May 2005.