Resolution on the situation of the Roma in the European Union

2005/2535(RSP) - 28/04/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution by 497 votes in favour, 25 against and 30 abstentions, strongly condemning all forms of discrimination faced by the Roma people and calling on the Council, the Commission, the Member States and the candidate countries to consider recognising the Roma as a European minority. They must publicly take steps to combat Anti-Gypsyism/Romaphobia in all forms, be it at local, national, regional or EU level. There are 12-15 million Roma living in Europe, 7-9 million of whom live in the EU. They suffer racial discrimination and in many cases are subject to severe structural discrimination, poverty and social exclusion, as well as multiple discrimination on the basis of gender, age, disability and sexual orientation. In its recitals, the resolution deplored the fact that a significant number of Roma asylum seekers have been expelled, or threatened with expulsion, from the host Member States, in contravention of the principle of non-refoulement,as set out in the 1951 Geneva Convention and associated protocols.

Parliament urged the Commission to include the issue of combating Anti-Gypsyism/Romaphobia across Europe among its priorities for the 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All. Political parties and civil society at all levels must make it clear that racial hatred against Roma can never be tolerated in European society. The Commission must further ensure, in the framework of the political requirements of the Copenhagen criteria, that candidate countries make real efforts to strengthen the rule of law and protect human and minority rights, particularly those of the Roma population.

Member States and candidate countries are asked to:

- take appropriate action to eliminate any racial hatred and incitement to discrimination and violence against Roma in the media and in any form of communication technology;

- guarantee equal social and political rights to migrants of Romani origin;

- take concrete measures to improve the access of Roma to labour markets with the aim of securing better long-term employment;

- ensure equal access to health care and social security services for all, to end all discriminatory practices, in particular the segregation of Roma in maternity wards, and to prevent the practice of non-consensual sterilisation of Romani women;

- bring about deghettoisation, to combat discriminatory practices in providing housing and to assist individual Roma in finding alternative, sanitary housing. Parliament stated that the current ghettoisation in Europe is unacceptable;

- ensure that all Roma children have access to mainstream education. Parliament called on Member States in which Roma children are segregated into schools for the mentally disabled or placed in separate classrooms from their peers to move forward with desegregation programmes within a predetermined period of time, thus ensuring free access to quality education for Roma children and preventing the rise of anti-Romani sentiment amongst schoolchildren.

Parliament went on to urge governments in regions with Roma populations to take further steps to integrate Roma civil servants at all administrative and decision-making levels in line with previous commitments and to allocate the necessary resources for the effective operation of such positions.

Political parties, at both national and European level, should review their party structures and procedures with the aim of removing all barriers that directly or indirectly militate against the participation of Roma and incorporate policies geared to full Roma integration into their mainstream political and social agenda.