Resolution on the situation in Mari El in the Russian federation

2005/2564(RSP) - 12/05/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on violations of human rights and democracy in the Republic of Mari El in the Russian Federation.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled as a joint resolution by the EPP-ED, PES, ALDE, Greens/EFA, GUE/NGL and UEN groups.

Recalling that journalists and correspondents of non-state mass media were continuously and frequently assaulted, harassed and intimidated in Mari El (in the Russian Federation, 600km east of Moscow) in February 2005, and that the local and federal governments have failed to take adequate steps to bring the perpetrators to justice, the Parliament condemns those acts and calls on the federal and local authorities to bring the perpetrators of such acts to justice, and ensure respect for freedom of expression. It also calls for a speedy, comprehensive and independent inquiry by federal and local authorities into the allegations of irregularities before and during the presidential elections in Mari El on 19 December 2004.

The Parliament stresses that the multi-ethnic character of the Russian Federation greatly contributes to the cultural and linguistic diversity of Europe, and is a phenomenon of which all citizens of the Russian Federation are justifiably proud. It therefore expresses its concern at the closure of schools in regions that voted overwhelmingly for the opposition candidate during the presidential elections. At the same time, the Parliament calls on the Government of Mari El to immediately stop political retribution and intimidation directed at dissenting public servants, and refrain from undue political interference in the affairs of educational and cultural institutions.

Lastly, the Parliament calls on the local and federal authorities to respect their obligations under international law by ensuring, in particular, that the Mari language and Russian are placed on the same footing throughout the republic.