Resolution on the trafficking in children in Guatemala

2005/2590(RSP) - 07/07/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on trafficking in children in Guatemala.

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

The Parliament notes that, according to the UN special rapporteur's report on the sale and trafficking of children, Guatemala's laws on adoption are among the least stringent in the region, while trafficking in children is not even classified as a crime. Moreover, the abuses occurring in Guatemala include forced or surrogate pregnancies, removal of children from their real mothers, substitution of documents, alteration of public records, and the existence of clandestine 'nurseries'. Abuses are also committed by those authorising adoptions, while an increasing number of international adoption agencies are offering children for sale.

Given that Guatemala is a source, transit and destination country for women and children from Guatemala and other Central American countries who are trafficked for purposes of sexual and labour exploitation, the Parliament **condemns trafficking in children** and the existence of an organised crime network with international connections and as well as the manipulation by the adoption agencies. The Parliament stresses that adoptions should only be carried by governmental bodies and non-profit organisations and calls on Guatemala to enact specific legislation on adoptions and to adopt suitable measures to prevent profiteering from international adoptions. It urges the Public Prosecutor's Office to take out penal proceedings against the criminal networks trafficking in children and calls for the **launching of a global plan of priority actions aimed at children** and adolescents in Latin America, in line with UNICEF measures.

Moreover, the Parliament notes that, in 2004, 527 women were murdered, with most involving firearms. It therefore calls on Guatemala to take the necessary measures to ensure that murders of women no longer go unpunished, and to take a proactive stand on women's rights.

Whilst the Parliament welcomes President Berger's declarations regarding abolition of the death penalty, it expects more from this government, notably measures against lynchings and to promote human rights.

Lastly, the Parliament reiterates its recommendation to the Commission, as made in its resolution of 10 April 2003, that the EU's future strategy for Guatemala for 2007-2013 should include social cohesion, the right to food, rural development and reform of the system of landholding and land use, as priority areas for future EU cooperation policy. According to the Parliament, this policy should also lay stress on **eliminating illegal adoptions**, firm support for human rights, ending impunity, respect for the rights of indigenous peoples, and promotion and protection of women's rights and the rights of the child.