Resolution on the human rights situation in Ethiopia

2005/2589(RSP) - 07/07/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted by 80 votes to 0 with 2 abstentions a resolution on the human rights situation in Ethiopia.

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

It condemns the violent repression of civilians, opposition leaders and supporters and the killing of at least 36 persons during protest demonstrations on 8 June 2005 following the postponement of the announcement of the final results of the general elections on 15 May 2005. Parliament expresses its fullest sympathy and solidarity to the people of Ethiopia and presents its condolences to the victims' families. It hopes that an impartial commission of inquiry will determine who was responsible for the tragic turn of events on 8 June 2005 and that the persons in question will be brought to justice. Members call for the freeing of journalists and others who are held without charge, and for those arrested to be treated in strict conformity with Ethiopian law and the Ethiopian Constitution, in accordance with international law on human rights. They note that up until 8 June the electoral process had not seen any major incidents, and the Ethiopian population's faith in democracy had been demonstrated by the participation of around 90% of the electorate in the vote on 15 May 2005. Parliament calls on the Ethiopian government to put an immediate end to the restriction of reporting of opposition activities and messages in public media and calls for a code of conduct for the press to be put in place rapidly in consultation with the media.

The resolution welcomes the recent release of some 4 000 detainees and the government's announcement that the detainees at the Ziway military camp will now have access to their families and to the International Committee of the Red Cross, and it underlines the key role that can and must be played by the Committee in assisting detainees and investigating human rights conditions in prisons.

Referring to the fact that the government and the opposition parties, in a joint statement issued on 10 June 2005, undertook to "seek for a resolution to all the problems by legal and peaceful means", Parliament insists that the agreement of 10 June 2005 be scrupulously respected, and hopes that the European Union will **continue to contribute to a peaceful and democratic solution to the Ethiopian political crisis,** in particular by supplying observers to the examination of the electoral complaints. It notes that complaints of fraud were lodged with the electoral commission, which decided to open an inquiry in 135 constituencies. It calls on the Union and the international community to stay vigilant and to do their utmost to contribute to a peaceful solution to the current tensions and not to allow the Ethiopian democratisation process to come to a halt.