Resolution on the situation in Ethiopia

2005/2620(RSP) - 13/10/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

In a resolution on the situation in Ethiopia, the European Parliament expressed serious concern that the political dialogue between the government and the opposition, opened on 2 October 2005, was broken by the ruling party. Parliament urged all parties to resume dialogue and to work to allow multiparty democracy to start functioning with the rights of the opposition fully respected by the government and the ruling party.

Parliament welcomed the key role played by the head of the Commission's delegation in Ethiopia and the Council Presidency through its British Ambassador in realising the political talks. It commended the opposition's commitment to working within the constitutional framework without resorting to violence, and called on the government also to respect the fundamental principles of the constitution, especially fundamental freedoms and human rights. The government is asked to guarantee opposition access to the media, as was made available in the run-up to the 15 May 2005 election.

Parliament also expressed its serious concern at the government's attempts to reverse the democratic process, including the introduction of an absolute majority requirement for the submission of agendas in the forthcoming parliament, which render the opposition's gains meaningless. It called on all political parties to work towards a political solution that will secure the Ethiopian Parliament's democratic prerogatives. The European Parliament also called for an end to the persecution and intimidation of representatives of the opposition political parties and the immediate release of those still detained. The Ethiopian Government must guarantee that detainees will not be subjected to ill-treatment and will have access to their families and medical care.

Furthermore, all political prisoners must be before the courts within 48 hours of their initial apprehension, as prescribed under Ethiopian law, or released without further delay.

Finally, the European Parliament expressed strong concern about the denial to opposition members of the right to take the floor, about the bill passed stripping parliamentary immunity from all elected opposition members who did not take their seats and about the bill to extend the previous administration of municipalities in disregard of electoral results. There must be a prompt reversal of such measures, since they are incompatible with minimum democratic standards and further exacerbate political tensions and mistrust.