Resolution on the situation in Afghanistan

2005/2619(RSP) - 18/01/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution referring to the holding of presidential elections in October 2004 and of parliamentary and provincial elections in September 2005. It expressed its sympathy to the Afghan people who, throughout the Bonn process and in particular on the occasion of both polls in 2004 and 2005, demonstrated an extraordinary will in overcoming the difficulties posed by a post-conflict situation and showed that they were committed to peace and democracy-building.

Parliament welcomed the success of the recent elections which, taking into account their complexity, were an extraordinary accomplishment. It deplored, however, the fact that eight candidates were killed during the electoral process along with a number of election workers, clerics and others, and that the EU Election Observation Mission reported irregularities and fraud in a number of provinces. However, it welcomed the fact that female candidates accounted for some 10% of the total number of candidates and that thanks to the female reserve seat system, women obtained 27.3% of the seats in the Wolesi Jirga (Lower House) and almost 30% in the Provincial Councils. The electoral law should be clarified to ensure that reserve seats represent a minimum and not a maximum number of the seats available for women.

Following these elections, the Afghan authorities emerge with full popular legitimacy. Parliament felt that the Afghan people's expectations must now be met by accountable governance, starting with the adoption of sustainable reforms aimed at improving people's quality of life as well as of credible measures favouring gender and ethnic equality.

Parliament went on to discuss matters such as the importance of streamlining coordination amongst donors, the fact that a stronger emphasis must be placed on the concept of Afghan 'ownership' and linking aid more explicitly to performance. It insisted on greater visibility of EU funding, given that the EU is the second biggest donor in Afghanistan.

Parliament supported the donors' conference to be hosted by the UN in London in January 2006 in order to assess the political and financial support needed for the interim 'Afghanistan National Development Strategy'. This strategy should emphasise sustainability and specific targets, such as:

- respect for human rights, and in particular women's rights, and the rule of law;

- governance and institution-building, and in particular a functioning administration, an independent judiciary able to act against widespread corruption and a well-trained police force, given that the stability of Afghanistan is nowadays threatened more from the inside than from the outside;

- the creation of a system of checks and balances to define the roles and powers of each institution and the promotion of political pluralism.

Parliament moved to condemn all terrorist acts and congratulated the Afghan people, in particular Afghan women, who defied intimidation and threats in order to participate in the electoral process, either as candidates, electoral staff, local observers or voters. It also condemned the transfer of hundreds of men captured by US troops after the invasion of Afghanistan in 2002 to the illegal Guantánamo detention centre, where torture and other ill-treatment by US personnel have, according to numerous testimonies, been commonplace occurrences. Parliament called for the immediate closure of the centre, and stated that the USA must close any secret 'dark' prison in the Afghanistan.

Finally, Parliament expressed deep concern about illegal drug production which could lead to an HIV /AIDS emergency in the region. There are extremely high costs and serious flaws in terms of effectiveness of a counter-narcotics strategy based only on eradication and alternative livelihood. Parliament called on the participants in the London Conference to take into consideration the proposal of licensed production of opium for medical purposes, as already granted to a number of countries.