Resolution on the case of Ayman Nour, Chairman of the Ghad Party in Egypt

2006/2555(RSP) - 06/04/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted by 87 votes to none with no abstentions a resolution on Egypt: the Ayman Nour affair.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by EPP-ED, PES, Greens/ALE, GUE/NGL, UEN and ALDE groups.

Recalling that Dr Ayman Nour (the leader of the El Ghad Party and former member of Parliament) was arrested, along with others, after standing at the 2005 presidental and parliamentary elections, Parliament calls for the **release of the opposition leader**.

It stresses that respect for human rights is a fundamental value of the EU-Egypt Association Agreement and reaffirms the importance of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership for promoting the rule of law and fundamental freedoms. Parliament calls on the Egyptian authorities to act in accordance with the laws of Egypt in the spirit of its professed desire for increased political openness and dialogue. The Egyptian government is urged to reform the legal framework regulating elections in accordance with international standards providing for freedom and transparency, as well as enabling political groups to be founded and civil society organisations to be represented. The resolution calls on the Council and the Commission to devise practical arrangements in cooperation with Parliament for regular assessments of compliance with Article 2 of the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement by all contracting parties thereto with a view to bringing about verifiable progress in this area.

It also stresses the positive and moderate role that Egypt plays in the Middle East peace process and calls on the Commission and the Council to strengthen this role. The Egyptian government is called to establish precise timetables and benchmarks in order effectively to monitor the progress of the implementation of the Action Plan and thereby involve and consult organisations working within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network.

Members take the view that the **lifting of the Emergency Laws** is an absolute necessity if democracy is to be respected.

They are concerned about the growing role of fundamentalism in the areas of academic freedom and freedom of the media and private religious belief. These areas, as well as an end to discrimination between citizens on grounds of sex, religion, race or any other grounds are to be included in the Action Plan. The latter should include concrete, measurable and time-bound commitments, even if this means prolonging the negotiations beyond the proposed date for the meeting of the EU-Egypt Association Council, scheduled to take place on 12 June 2006. Parliament calls, in particular, on the Commission and the Egyptian government to tackle in the Action Plan sensitive issues such as the lifting of the state of emergency, the prevention of and the fight against torture, the abolition of arbitrary detention and the reinforcement of the independence of the judiciary.