Resolution on North Korean asylum seekers, in particular in Thailand

2006/2622(RSP) - 07/09/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted by 83 votes to 0, with no abstentions, a resolution on North Korean asylum seekers, in particular in Thailand.

The resolution was tabled by the EPP-ED, PES, ALDE, Greens/EFA, GUE/NGL and UEN groups.

The resolution recalls that, in recent years, tens of thousands of North Koreans have fled from their home country because of repression and widespread hunger, some risking their lives in travelling through China to arrive in Thailand, which has become a transit destination for North Koreans fleeing their homeland.

On 22 August 2006, the Thai police arrested a group of 175 asylum seekers who were charged with illegal entry and brought before a court, where they were fined and put into jail for 30 days because they were unable to pay.

The Parliament deplores the fact that thousands of North Korean citizens flee their country because of repression, hunger and economic decline and urges the Thai authorities not to repatriate the North Korean refugees, since they and their families will face dire consequences.

MEPs call on Thailand, which is well-known for its long tradition of hospitality towards refugees, to seek, in close cooperation with the UNHCR and other humanitarian organisations, to find a rapid and acceptable solution for the North Korean refugees by sending them to a third country of their choice after the expiry of their 30-day jail sentence. They also call on countries able to take the refugees in to make this known at the earliest opportunity in order to ensure that they are not kept in detention.

The Commission is called upon to monitor closely the situation of North Korean refugees in collaboration with the UNHCR and, if necessary, to provide appropriate financial aid.