Resolution on Uzbekistan

2006/2649(RSP) - 26/10/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted by 68 votes to 1, with 2 abstentions, a resolution on Uzbekistan.

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

The General Affairs and External Relations Council is expected to consider on 13 November 2006 whether it will extend the sanctions adopted last year following the events of May 2005 in Andijan. The resolution recalls, however, that the government of Uzbekistan has not yet allowed any independent inquiry into the events in Andijan, despite the constant and repeated demands made by various international bodies. Moreover, following the Andijan massacre in 2005 the Uzbek authorities launched a crackdown on human rights defenders, independent journalists and civil society institutions, putting on trial hundreds of people suspected of involvement in the uprising.

According to the report by the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture published in March 2006, there has been no fundamental change in the widespread use of torture or in policies and practices that could effectively combat it, and no meaningful steps have been taken by the Uzbek government to end the culture of impunity.

In this context, the Parliament reiterates the importance of EU-Uzbekistan relations, but stresses that those relations must be based on mutual respect for the principles of democracy, rule of law and human rights, as is clearly laid down in the EUUzbekistan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. The Council is therefore called upon to make a considered decision, on 13 November 2006, on the possible extension of sanctions. MEPs also insist that the embargo on arms sales and military transfers be continued.

Uzbekistan is called upon to:

- cooperate fully with the OSCE and with the UN, especially with regard to the call for a credible and transparent independent enquiry, to comply with international law and to be receptive to any of the UN special procedures for which invitations have been requested and open to OSCE monitors and independent observers;
- release all human rights defenders, journalists and political opposition members who are still in detention and to allow them to work freely and without fear of persecution, and to put an end to the harassment of NGOs.

Lastly, the Parliament calls on the Kyrgyz Republic and the other neighbouring countries to fully respect the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and urges the Council and the Commission to closely follow the situation of all Uzbek refugees who have already been extradited to Uzbekistan.