Resolution on the human rights situation of the Dalits in India

2007/2505(RSP) - 01/02/2007 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution tabled by the Committee on Development on the human rights situation of the Dalits in India.

Whilst welcoming the various provisions in the Constitution of India for the protection and promotion of the rights of Dalits, the Parliament notes that, in spite of these provisions, implementation of laws protecting the rights of Dalits remains grossly inadequate, and that atrocities, untouchability, illiteracy, inequality of opportunity, manual scavenging, inadequacy of wages, bonded labour, child labour and landlessness continue to blight the lives of India's Dalits.

The resolution calls on the Indian Government to:

- improve its criminal justice system in order to facilitate registration of charges against perpetrators of crimes against Dalits and to increase the conviction rate for such perpetrators;
- take urgent steps to ensure equal access for Dalits to police stations and all other public institutions and facilities;
- ensure complete and time-bound implementation of all policy and budgetary measures towards the welfare and development of Dalits;
- engage further with relevant UN human rights bodies on the effective elimination of caste-based discrimination;
- ratify the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and to take preventive measures to reduce the risk of Dalits facing torture.

The Council and the Commission are called upon to raise the issue of caste-based discrimination during EU-India Summits and other meetings as part of all political, human rights, civil society, development and trade dialogues and to inform the committees concerned of the progress and outcome of such dialogues.

The Parliament reiterates its expectation that EU development programmes in India include specific measures to ensure that minorities such as Dalits and Adivasis and other marginalised communities, tribes and castes, are able to close the wide gap with the rest of the population regarding the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.