Resolution on the recent elections in Nigeria

2007/2557(RSP) - 24/05/2007 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a joint resolution sponsored by the **EPP-ED, PES, ALDE, UEN, Green /ALE** and **GUE/NGL** groups, in which it stated that the 2007 state and federal elections in Nigeria fell short of basic international and regional standards for democratic elections and could not be regarded as credible, free and fair, and it called for urgent remedial action in order to restore the conditions for holding credible and transparent elections in Nigeria.

The Nigerian authorities were urged to investigate election irregularities urgently, and to take immediate action to redress the situation and to make the perpetrators of those irregularities accountable for their actions. Parliament regretted that, despite an improved atmosphere in which freedoms of expression and assembly were broadly respected during the campaign, the elections could not be regarded as credible, and that they led to deaths, even before vote-counting began and sometimes even before votes were cast, with at least 200 people being killed in election-related incidents.

Parliament called on the Nigerian authorities to investigate all cases of violence and to hold perpetrators of such violence to account, and it called on the Government not to interfere with legal challenges to the electoral process. It wanted widespread civic rights and electoral education and stressed the need to tackle illiteracy, which denies Nigerian people access to the printed press and is also one of the main constraints on participation in elections, especially for women.

Parliament went on to endorse the conclusions of the European Union Election Observation Mission, and it called on the Commission by 446 votes for, 95 against and 15 abstentions to submit to the Council and the European Parliament a coherent and credible proposal on EU post-election policy which respects the free choice of the population in a given country, fearing that the current 'business as usual' policy is damaging and defeats the credibility of EU Election Observation Missions.

It stressed that EU aid to Nigeria should not be given to federal or state structures until new, credible elections had been held. Such aid must benefit the Nigerian people and should therefore be used for good governance, democratisation, voter education and community-based basic social services, particularly through civil society organisations. The Commission and its Delegation in Nigeria must ensure that the Government had no involvement in the selection of projects or the implementation of any funding under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights. Parliament urged the Federal Government to combat the patterns of corruption, violence and impunity, and to start negotiating with local populations on the future of the Niger Delta region, namely on its social, economic and environmental development.

Lastly, it noted that achieving the Millennium Development Goals was a key aspect of democracy and contributed to improving social justice and economic development.