Basic information

2011/2570(RSP) RSP - Resolutions on topical subjects	Procedure completed
Resolution on the priorities of the 16th Session of the UN Human Rights Council and the 2011 review **Subject** 6.10.09 Human rights situation in the world 6.40.13 Relations with/in the context of international organisations: UN, OSCE, OECD, Council of Europe, EBRD	

Key players

European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner
	External Relations	ASHTON Catherine

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
09/03/2011	Debate in Parliament		
10/03/2011	Decision by Parliament	T7-0097/2011	Summary
10/03/2011	Results of vote in Parliament		
10/03/2011	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2011/2570(RSP)
Procedure type	RSP - Resolutions on topical subjects
Procedure subtype	Resolution on statement
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 136-p2
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Motion for a resolution		B7-0158/2011	02/03/2011	
Motion for a resolution		B7-0160/2011	02/03/2011	

Motion for a resolution		B7-0161/2011	02/03/2011	
Motion for a resolution		B7-0162/2011	02/03/2011	
Motion for a resolution		B7-0163/2011	02/03/2011	
Motion for a resolution		B7-0164/2011	02/03/2011	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0097/2011	10/03/2011	Summary

Resolution on the priorities of the 16th Session of the UN Human Rights Council and the 2011 review

2011/2570(RSP) - 10/03/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the priorities of the 16th Session of the UN Human Rights Council and the 2011 review.

The resolution was tabled by the S&D, ALDE, Greens/EFA, EPP, and ECR groups.

It underlines the importance of the 16th Session of the UNHRC and particularly the UNHRC review process, which provides for a unique opportunity to assess how the Council has implemented its mandate and presents an occasion for the Council to enhance its methods of work in order to be more efficient and systematic responses to human rights violations. It recalls that the review of the UNHRC is following two tracks, with the status of the body being discussed in New York, and the procedures in Geneva. At the same time, Parliament states that all international actors have to work for the elimination of double standards and the avoidance of selectivity and politicisation in the consideration of human rights issues.

It welcomes the **new Directorate for Human Rights and Democracy in the EEAS** and supports the establishment of a Brussels-based EU Council Working Group on Human Rights (COHOM) that would include human rights experts from all 27 EU Member States, and also supports the appointment of a high-level EU Special Representative for Human Rights. Members stress the importance of the EU's holding common positions on issues to be discussed during the 16th Session, and invite EU Member States to reinforce the EU practice of putting across 'one message, but with many voices' which has worked well in recent years in, for example, EU initiatives against the death penalty:

The work of the Human Rights Council: Parliament reiterates its call on EU Member States to oppose any attempt to undermine the concept of the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights. It is concerned that the **greatest obstacle to the UNHRC taking up its mandate more effectively is the 'bloc politics'** which often dominates, and its impact on the selection of countries and situations receiving UNHRC attention.

Members feel that the UNHRC should be better equipped to address both **chronic and emergency situations**, perhaps through the expansion of the human rights 'toolbox', by using panels not just during but also in between sessions, and by bringing sessions to regions away from Geneva. They regret that on several occasions the UNHRC has been unable to address serious human rights situations in an urgent and timely manner because of the **absence of adequate instruments**. They support the idea of independent 'triggers', and actively seek the creation of dedicated UNHRC mechanisms to respond promptly to the human rights crises like in the Middle East and North Africa, Iran and Belarus.

The resolution welcomes the adoption by consensus of a resolution on the **human rights situation in Libya** in the 15th Special Session on 25 February and calls for the dispatching of an independent international commission of inquiry to Libya (RSP/2011/2616) to investigate all alleged violations of international human rights law and strongly supports its recommendation to suspend Libya's membership of the UNHRC.

Parliament urges the EU to contribute pro-actively at the forthcoming UNHRC session to a resolution relating to the report on follow-up of the committee of independent experts to the **international fact-finding mission on the Gaza conflict**, and supports a referral to the GA and to International Justice mechanisms in the event of Israel and Palestinian parties failing to comply with their obligation to carry out investigations according to international standards. It welcomes the statements by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on her first visit to the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel and, in particular, the strong message that she conveyed with her criticism of Israeli settlement policy, and that international human rights law and international humanitarian law are not negotiable.

Members go on to regret that the **current practice of voluntary pledges has had very disparate and inadequate results**. All members should have effective standing invitations to Special Procedures as a minimum threshold for membership, in addition to a solid record of commitment to human rights.

Lastly, they call on Member States and the EEAS to engage in the 2011 review of the UNHRC to strengthen compliance with its mandate, stressing that **the UNHRC should be more of an early warning and preventive mechanism and that the expertise of Special Procedures should be used for this purpose.** There is a need for a transparent and all-inclusive review process, and Members calls on the EEAS to keep the Subcommittee on Human Rights of the European Parliament informed on the state of play of the review.

Universal Periodic Review (UPR): Parliament recognises the added value of the UPR as a shared experience for all governments, and supports further involvement of NGOs in the UPR by allowing the submission of written recommendations for consideration by the Working Group and participation in its deliberations. Recommendations should be more results-oriented and Members call for more involvement by independent experts and national human rights institutions in the UPR to ensure it is an effective follow-up mechanism. They calls on Member States to continue to engage in the review of the UNHRC, to ensure there is no gap between the first and second cycles of the UPR, and to ensure the second cycle focuses on the implementation and follow-up of recommendations.

Special Procedures: Parliament restates that Special Procedures lie at the core of the UN human rights machinery, and condemns attempts to undermine the independence of Special Procedures by putting governments in an oversight position over the Special Procedures, stressing that any sort of control would politicise and damage the effectiveness of the system. It calls on Member States to support the establishment of a follow up-mechanism on the implementation of recommendations of Special Procedures, and endorses the proposal by NGOs to strengthen the early warning capacity of Special Procedures through a mechanism that allows them to trigger the automatic consideration of a situation by the UNHRC.

EU involvement: Members insist on the EEAS, and notably the EU delegations in Geneva and New York, increasing the coherence, visibility and credibility of the EU's action in the UNHRC by further developing cross-regional outreach and cooperation and especially on lobbying the moderate states in all groups. They reiterate Parliament’s position concerning the concept of ‘defamation of religions’ and consider that the inclusion of this concept in the Protocol on complementary standards on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and all forms of discrimination is not appropriate. Parliament wants the EU to engage with the main sponsors of the resolution and other players to find an alternative to the resolution on defamation that will be presented. It regrets that as a side-effect of its efforts to seek consensus, the EU often appears to be lowering its ambitions, and believes the EU should be much bolder in putting forward and/or running with country resolutions.

Lastly, Parliament reiterates its call on EU Member States to ensure that human rights are respected in their own internal policies in order to avoid double standards and in view of the current accession process of the EU to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), as failure to do so fundamentally could weaken the EU's position in the UNHRC.