Basic information	
2011/2521(RSP) RSP - Resolutions on topical subjects	Procedure completed
Resolution on the situation of Christians in the context of freedom of religion **Subject** 6.10.08 Fundamental freedoms, human rights, democracy in general	

Key events			
Date	Event	Reference	Summary
19/01/2011	Debate in Parliament		
20/01/2011	Decision by Parliament	T7-0021/2011	Summary
20/01/2011	Results of vote in Parliament		
20/01/2011	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2011/2521(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		B7-0039/2011	17/01/2011	
Motion for a resolution		B7-0040/2011	17/01/2011	
Motion for a resolution		B7-0051/2011	17/01/2011	
Motion for a resolution		B7-0052/2011	17/01/2011	
Motion for a resolution		B7-0054/2011	17/01/2011	
Motion for a resolution		B7-0056/2011	17/01/2011	
Motion for a resolution		B7-0058/2011	17/01/2011	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0021/2011	20/01/2011	Summary

Resolution on the situation of Christians in the context of freedom of religion

2011/2521(RSP) - 20/01/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate which took place during the sitting of 19 January 2011, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the situation of Christians in the context of freedom of religion.

The resolution had been tabled by the EFD, S&D, ALDE, ECR, Greens/ALE, and EPP groups and to which the following MEPs are associated: Dutch MEP Cornelis de JONG (GUE/NGL) and Cypriot members Takis HADJIGEORGIOU and Kyriacos TRIANTAPHYLLIDES (both GUE/NGL).

It condemns the recent attacks on Christian communities in various countries and expresses its deep concerns about the proliferation of episodes of intolerance, repression and violent events directed against Christian communities, particularly in the countries of Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

Parliament cites many instances of violence against Christians in December 2010 and January 2011, including attacks designed to strike the Christian community in Nigeria; the terrorist attack on Coptic Christians in Alexandria; the bombing inside a chapel in Sulu, Philippines; the interruption by force of the celebration of Christmas Mass in the villages of Rizokarpaso and Ayia Triada in the northern part of Cyprus; and jihadi terrorist attacks against Assyrian Christian families in a series of coordinated bomb attacks on Christian homes in Iraq. Members note too that the Iranian Government has stepped up its campaign against Christians in the Islamic Republic, with more than 100 arrested in the past month, forcing many to flee the country or face criminal charges and a possible death sentence.

Parliament urges the governments concerned to ensure that perpetrators of these crimes and all persons responsible for the attacks, as well as for other violent acts against Christians or other religious or other minorities, are brought to justice. At the same time, Members call on the leadership of all religious communities in Europe to condemn attacks on Christian communities and other faith groups on the basis of equal respect for each denomination.

They call on the Council, the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice President of the European Commission, as appropriate to:

- pay increased attention to the subject of freedom of religion or belief and to the situation of religious communities, including Christians, in agreements and cooperation with third countries as well as in human rights reports;
- discuss the question of the persecution of Christians and respect for religious freedom or belief, which discussion should give rise to concrete results, especially as regards the instruments that can be used to provide security and protection for Christian communities under threat, wherever in the world they may be;
- develop as a matter of urgency an EU strategy on the enforcement of the human right to freedom of religion, including a list of measures against states who knowingly fail to protect religious denominations;
- in light of recent events and the increasing necessity for analysing and understanding the evolution of cultural and religious developments in international relations and contemporary societies, to develop a permanent capacity within the human rights directorate of the European External Action Service to monitor the situation of governmental and societal restrictions on religious freedom and related rights, and to report annually to Parliament;
- include a chapter on religious freedom in their Annual Human Rights report.

Parliament goes on to express its concerns about the fact that the Pakistani blasphemy law, which was publicly opposed by the late Governor Salman Taseer, is still used to persecute religious denominations, including Christians such as Asia Noreen, a Christian mother of five sentenced to death, and that the murderer of Governor Salman Taseer is treated by large sections of Pakistani society as a hero. However, it welcomes Egyptian public reaction which rapidly grasped that the attack was plotted to undermine the deep rooted traditional bonds between Christians and Muslims in Egypt, and welcomes the joint demonstrations by Coptic Christians and Muslims in Egypt to protest against the attack.

Members urge the authorities of states with alarmingly high levels of attacks against religious denominations to take responsibility in ensuring normal and public religious practices for all religious denominations, to step up their efforts to provide reliable and efficient protection for the religious denominations in their countries and to ensure the personal safety and physical integrity of members of religious denominations in the country.

Lastly, Parliament urges EU institutions to comply with the obligation under Article 17 of the TFEU to maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with churches and religious, philosophical and non-confessional organisations, in order to ensure that the issue of the persecution of Christians and other religious communities is a priority issue which is discussed on a systematic basis.