

Thursday 13 December 2001

22. Human rights: Immigration in Ireland

B5-0777, 0796, 0800 and 0805/2001

European Parliament resolution on the tragedy involving immigrants in Ireland

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948,
 - having regard to the Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees of 28 July 1951, as modified by the New York Protocol of 31 January 1967,
 - having regard to the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 4 November 1950,
 - having regard to Title IV, Article 61 et seq., of the EC Treaty,
 - having regard to Articles 2 and 6 of the EU Treaty,
- A. appalled at the tragic deaths of the eight people, including four children, who were found, at Wexford in Ireland on 8 December 2001, in a freight container which had been shipped from the Belgian port of Zeebrugge,
- B. recalling that similar incidents occur daily at the Union's frontiers, with countless immigrants and refugees losing their lives while attempting to enter the countries of the Union illegally, and that those involved in the trafficking of human beings have perpetrated yet another atrocity involving victims of organised gangs of traffickers, who demand substantial sums for their services,
- C. whereas the international trade in human beings has become a fast-growing, well-organised and highly profitable business,
- D. appalled at the practice of trafficking in human beings, which exploits the despair of people in Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia in order to profit from illegal immigration networks, with a total disregard for the dignity of human life,
1. Expresses its dismay at the events in Ireland; extends its sympathy to the victims' families and expresses its grief for all the victims of this intolerable human tragedy;
 2. Condemns firmly the criminal acts perpetrated by all those who profit from the trafficking in human beings;
 3. Regards it as essential that the fight against the often transnational criminal networks involved in the trafficking of human beings and the individuals who exploit illegal labour should be stepped up, in particular by strengthening cooperation among European countries and introducing exemplary penalties, drawing a clear distinction between the victims and the perpetrators of the crimes involved;
 4. Recognises that the survivors have been through a terrible trauma, and invites the Irish Government to grant refugee status and enable the survivors of the Wexford tragedy to remain in Ireland, if they so wish, and to help them to rebuild their lives;
 5. Calls for the adoption and implementation of all legal instruments based on the conclusions of the Tampere European Council, including the adoption of the Framework Decision on Trafficking in Human Beings, the establishment of common EU policies on asylum and immigration and the enhancement of judicial and police cooperation;
 6. Calls on the Council to foster immigration and asylum policies which respect human rights and are based on the free movement of persons, in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention, and improvements to the right of asylum, the protection of refugees and the conditions for the reception of migrants;

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7. Takes the view that European policies on the control of immigration must go beyond the imposition of frontier checks and attack the political, economic and social reasons which, in the developing world, prompt millions of people to flee their countries;
 8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the government and parliament of Ireland.
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23. Human rights: Togo

B5-0768, 0778, 0786, 0793 and 0804/2001

European Parliament resolution on the human rights situation in Togo

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Togo, and in particular that of 6 September 2001 ⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to the resolution adopted by the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly on the situation in West Africa, with particular reference to the paragraphs on Togo,
- A. whereas the political and economic situation in Togo calls for a climate of confidence to be re-established without delay; whereas this is the only means of securing the economic development and democratisation of Togolese society which the Lomé framework agreement was intended to foster,
 - B. whereas the new threats of legal action against Mr Agboyibo, chairman of the Action Committee for Renewal, stem solely from his political activities,
 - C. whereas the Togolese President, General Eyadema, has stated his willingness to grant a pardon to Mr Agboyibo should he ask for one,
 - D. whereas Mr Agboyibo is refusing to apply for a presidential pardon until such time as the Court of Appeal has given its ruling,
 - E. having regard to the imprisonment of the leader of the students' union, Hounjo Mawudzuro,
 - F. deploring the fact that the President of the National Assembly has expressed the wish to amend the electoral code and change the Constitution, which is incompatible with President Eyadema's commitment, repeated on several occasions, to respect Article 59 of the Constitution limiting the number of presidential terms,
 - G. deploring the violent acts of aggression by militants of the ruling RTP party against opposition parties whenever they attempt to campaign in the north of the country,
 - H. whereas the decree setting the date for the next parliamentary elections in March 2002 and the release of a budget for their organisation must be seen as a step forward,
1. Calls on President Eyadema not to wait until Yawovi Agboyibo applies for a pardon before having him released, so as to demonstrate that the presidential alliance will allow the Togolese opposition to express itself fully and freely during the forthcoming elections;
 2. Reiterates its condemnation of human rights abuses by President Eyadema's regime;
 3. Deplores the fact that Mr Mawudzuro, who was released on 28 November 2001, is still facing charges of character defamation and false accusation;
 4. Requests that Mr Agoyibo's conviction be removed from his police record, so as to enable him to stand as a candidate in the forthcoming elections;

⁽¹⁾ 'Texts Adopted', Item 16.