

Thursday 21 November 2002

P5_TA(2002)0573

Iran (case of Hashem Aghajari)

European Parliament resolution on Iran

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 13 December 2001 ⁽¹⁾ on relations between the EU and the Islamic Republic of Iran and its resolution of 24 October 2002 ⁽²⁾ on the human rights dialogue with Iran,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is a state party,
 - A. whereas Dr Hashem Aghajari, head of the history department at Tarbiat Modaress University in Teheran, was sentenced to death for apostasy by a local court in the town of Hamedan after giving a speech entitled 'Islamic Protestantism', reportedly calling for a 'religious renewal of Shiite Islam' in which Muslims should not 'blindly follow religious leaders',
 - B. whereas Dr Aghajari is a prominent member of the reformist movement, which supports President Mohammad Khatami,
 - C. whereas this sentence has triggered several days of strikes amongst university students in Iran and provoked widespread criticism in Iran and abroad,
 - D. whereas Parliament Speaker Mehdi Karroubi has reportedly called the death sentence passed on Dr Aghajari 'a disgrace to the country's judicial system' and President Khatami has been quoted as saying that the verdict 'should never have been issued at all',
 - E. concerned at Dr Hashem Aghajari's delicate state of health,
 - F. whereas the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, ordered the judiciary to review the verdict and it is reported that Dr Aghajari's lawyer then announced that he would appeal against the sentence,
 - G. whereas EU-Iran talks are in progress with a view to launching negotiations on a cooperation and trade agreement, as well as a separate dialogue on human rights at troika level in December 2002,
1. Calls urgently for the death sentence against Dr Aghajari to be suspended immediately or commuted on appeal in line with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and in anticipation thereof welcomes the steps already taken in Iran towards a review of the verdict against him;
 2. Calls on the Iranian authorities to provide Dr Aghajari with appropriate medical assistance and treatment;
 3. Notes that the largest protest demonstrations of the last three years reportedly passed without major arrests or police interference, and welcomes this as a sign of hope for growing openness to civil liberties and fundamental human rights in Iran;
 4. Calls on the Council and the Commission to follow closely the case of Dr Aghajari and other similar cases, and underlines once again that any future trade and cooperation agreement with Iran must contain a human rights clause based on the corresponding article in the Cotonou Agreement and be submitted to the European Parliament for approval;
 5. Welcomes the two reform proposals by President Khatami, which have been approved by Parliament, as a decisive step towards democracy aimed at restricting the absolute powers of the Council of Guardians and extending the limited legislative powers of the government;

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 177 E, 25.7.2002, p. 296.

⁽²⁾ P5_TA(2002)0522.

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6. Notes that President Khatami, his cabinet and dozens of members of parliament have announced that they will resign if the Council of Guardians vetoes the proposed legislation;
 7. Reaffirms its position in favour of closer cooperation between the EU and Iran, and especially of a critical dialogue on human rights issues and cases, and looks forward to the return visit of a delegation from the Iranian Parliament with a view to preparing future parliamentary relations with the Iranian Majlis;
 8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission and the Government and Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
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Extending Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 to third country nationals *

European Parliament legislative resolution on the proposal for a Council regulation on extending the provisions of Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 to nationals of third countries who are not already covered by these provisions solely on the ground of their nationality (COM(2002) 59 – C5-0084/2002 – 2002/0039(CNS))

(Consultation procedure)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission proposal to the Council (COM(2002) 59 ⁽¹⁾),
 - having been consulted by the Council pursuant to Article 63(4) of the EC Treaty (C5-0084/2002),
 - having regard to Rule 67 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the opinion of the Committee on Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs (A5-0369/2002),
1. Approves the Commission proposal as amended;
 2. Calls on the Commission to alter its proposal accordingly, pursuant to Article 250(2) of the EC Treaty;
 3. Calls on the Council to notify Parliament should it intend to depart from the text approved by Parliament;
 4. Notwithstanding its acceptance of the chosen legal basis for this Regulation, reserves the right to reconsider it in the event of the Regulation being amended;
 5. Asks to be consulted again if the Council intends to amend the Commission proposal substantially;
 6. Instructs its President to forward its position to the Council and Commission.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 126 E, 28.5.2002, p. 388.