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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for the debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 115 of the Rules of Procedure

by Jules Maaten, Marios Matsakis, Marco Cappato

on behalf of the ALDE Group

on Afghanistan

European Parliament resolution on Afghanistan

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Afghanistan, in particular, to the one of 18 January 2006,
- having regard to the opening of the International Conference in London on 31 January 2006, aimed at drawing up a post-Bonn convention on Afghanistan, in response to the support of the international community as regards security, governance and development, all of which are challenges that Afghanistan is currently facing,
- having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedures,
 - A. whereas Sayed Perwiz Kambakhsh, a student in journalism and correspondent for Jahan-e Naw ("the new World"), has been imprisoned since 27 October 2007,
 - B. whereas Perwiz Kambakhsh was sentenced to death on a charge of blasphemy on 22 January in the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif in Balkh province of Afghanistan,
 - C. whereas the death sentence against Perwiz Kambakhsh comes despite the UN General Assembly's adoption of a resolution (18 December 2007) calling for a worldwide moratorium on the use of the death penalty and at a time when a total of 135 countries have abolished the death penalty in law or in practice,
 - D. whereas freedom of press is guaranteed under the new Afghan Constitution,
 - E. whereas on 6 February, a delegation of the Independent Journalists' Association in Afghanistan (AIJA) met with President Hamid Karzai in Kabul; the journalists provided him with details of this case, and asked him to intervene on Mr Kambakhsh's behalf, even though the Head of the State had raised hopes of his forthcoming release,
 - F. whereas President Karzai's efforts in the country's democratisation process should be supported,
 - G. expressing its concern at the condemnation of the Afghan Senate, about which Aminaldin Mozafari, Secretary of the Senate, declared to the press on 31 January 2008 that "the publication of the first official statement of the Senate was a technical error",

H. considering also the fight waged for years by a number of Afghan intellectuals, academics and journalists against the oppression formerly inflicted by the communist regime and then by the Taliban,

1. Expresses its full solidarity with Mr Perwiz Kambakhsh and with all those who fight for independent journalism in Afghanistan and throughout the world;
2. Believes that the death sentence is a serious step backwards after all the efforts made up to now for democratisation and freedom of expression in Afghanistan;
3. Notes the declarations made by Hamid Karzai on 6 February 2008 to a delegation of Afghan journalists regarding Sayed Perwiz Kambakhsh, the journalist condemned to death, saying not to worry about the fate of the young man accused of disseminating information which insults Islam;
4. Calls on President Karzai to use his powers to pardon Perwiz Kambakhsh;
5. Believes that further deepening of EU cooperation with the Afghans will depend on the outcome of Mr Perwiz Kambakhsh's situation;
6. Calls on the Commission to come up with a European version of the American 'Global Online Freedom Act' in order to protect dissidents, guarantee freedom on the internet and the ethical conduct of European internet companies in third countries;
7. Calls on the Afghan authorities to review the judiciary procedures so that freedom of expression guaranteed by the Constitution can be applied and so that the religious tribunal can operate in respect of human rights and fundamental liberties; estime que la Commission et les Etats membres doivent soutenir ces efforts aussi par l'aide de programmes de soutien judiciaire qui soient aussi décentrés dans le territoire du pays;
8. Calls on the Afghan authorities to contribute jointly to such an effort;
9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and to the President, Government and Parliament of Afghanistan.