



Plenary sitting

B8-0540/2018

13.11.2018

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

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

pursuant to Rule 135 of the Rules of Procedure

on Vietnam, notably the situation of political prisoners
(2018/2925(RSP))

Cristian Dan Preda, Michaela Šojdrová, Tunne Kelam, Eduard Kukan, Milan Zver, Elisabetta Gardini, Jarosław Wałęsa, Lorenzo Cesa, Tomáš Zdechovský, Ivan Štefanec, Pavel Svoboda, József Nagy, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Krzysztof Hetman, Csaba Sógor, Patricija Šulin, Romana Tomc, Adam Szejnfeld, David McAllister, Lefteris Christoforou, Dubravka Šuica, Anders Sellström, Deirdre Clune, Seán Kelly, Laima Liucija Andrikiienė, Marijana Petir, Ivana Maletić, Željana Zovko, Francis Zammit Dimech, Inese Vaidere
on behalf of the PPE Group

European Parliament resolution on Vietnam, notably the situation of political prisoners (2018/2925(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Vietnam,
 - having regard to the Local EU statement of 20 August 2018 on the recent conviction of Mr Le Dinh Luong,
 - having regard to the Statement by the Spokesperson of the European External Action Service (EEAS) of 5 April 2018 on the sentencing of human rights activists in Vietnam,
 - having regard to the Statement by the Spokesperson of the EEAS of 9 February 2018 on the sentencing of human rights defenders in Vietnam,
 - having regard to the 7th EU-Vietnam Human Rights Dialogue of 1 December 2017,
 - having regard to the EU-Vietnam Partnership and Cooperation Agreement signed on 27 June 2012,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Vietnam acceded in 1982,
 - having regard to Rules 135(5) and 123(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the EU considers Vietnam to be an important partner in Asia; whereas the EU and Vietnam enjoy strong cooperation across a wide range of areas, concerning political issues, global challenges, trade and development;
- B. whereas Vietnam is witnessing a worrying trend of prosecuting and sentencing of human rights activists and bloggers, in contravention with the country's obligations under international law;
- C. whereas Mr Le Dinh Luong, a human rights defender who has peacefully advocated for the promotion and protection of human rights, was sentenced on 16 August 2018 under the national security provisions of the Penal Code to 20 years in prison and 5 years of house arrest;
- D. whereas representatives of the EU Delegation and of EU Member States' embassies were not allowed to observe the trial of Mr Le Dinh Luong;
- E. whereas on 5 April 2018 members of Brotherhood for Democracy, were sentenced to prison terms between 7 and 15 years as part of an extensive enforcement of the national security provisions of the Penal Code;

- F. whereas in June 2018 the Vietnamese lawmakers approved the new cyber law overriding strong objections from the business community, rights groups and western governments; whereas the new law would undermine economic development, digital innovation and further stifle political dissent;
- G. whereas on 12 April 2018 a group of UN experts, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, the Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, have urged Vietnam not to crackdown on civil society or stifle dissent;
- H. whereas the EU-Vietnam Human Rights Dialogue is an important avenue for ongoing comprehensive discussion of issues of concern to the EU, including the full respect of the fundamental rights to freedom expression, association and peaceful assembly;
- I. whereas freedom of religion or belief is repressed in Vietnam and the Catholic Church and non-recognised religions, such as the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam, several Protestant churches and others, including ethnic minority Montagnards, continue to suffer severe religious persecution;
1. Condemns the sentencing of peaceful activists in Vietnam; underlines that they have exercised their right to freedom of expression; stresses that their convictions are in direct breach of Vietnam's international obligations;
 2. Calls on the Vietnamese authorities to immediately and unconditionally release all citizens detained for peacefully exercising their freedom of expression;
 3. Expresses its concern about the rise in the number of detentions, arrests and convictions of Vietnamese citizens related to the expression of their opinions;
 4. Expresses serious concerns about the extensive application of the national security provisions in Vietnam's Penal Code;
 5. Expresses its concern over the Law on Cyber Security which should come into force in January 2019, which would further limit the freedom of expression;
 6. Reiterates its call on the Vietnamese authorities to end all restrictions on and acts of harassment against human rights defenders and to guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment;
 7. Expresses its concern about restrictions on freedom of religion in Vietnam; calls on the Government of Vietnam to put an end to the harassment of religious communities; underlines that the Law on Belief and Religion, which came into force in January 2018, is incompatible with international norms;
 8. Welcomes the strengthened partnership and Human Rights Dialogue between the EU and Vietnam and recalls the importance of the Dialogue as a key instrument to be used in an efficient manner to accompany and encourage Vietnam in the implementation of the necessary reforms;

9. Notes that the EU will continue to monitor and work with the authorities and all relevant stakeholders to improve the human rights situation in Vietnam;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign affairs and Security Policy, the Secretary-General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the Government and National Assembly of Vietnam.