

Combating the rise of extremism in Europe

European Parliament resolution of 13 December 2007 on combating the rise of extremism in Europe

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on racism, xenophobia and extremism, particularly that of 20 February 1997 on racism, xenophobia and the extreme right¹, that of 15 June 2006 on the increase in racist and homophobic violence in Europe² and its position of 29 November 2007 on the proposal for a Council Framework Decision on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law³,
- having regard to its resolution of 27 January 2005 on the Holocaust, anti-Semitism and racism⁴,
- having regard to Articles 6, 7 and 29 of the EU Treaty and Article 13 of the EC Treaty, which commit the EU and its Member States to upholding human rights and fundamental freedoms and which provide it with the means to fight racism, xenophobia and discrimination, to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (the Charter of Fundamental Rights) and to the Council Regulation (EC) No 168/2007 of 15 February 2007 establishing the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency⁵ (the Fundamental Rights Agency),
- having regard to the international human rights instruments which prohibit discrimination based on racial and ethnic origin, notably the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR), both signed by all the Member States and a large number of other States,
- having regard to European Union activities to fight racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and homophobia, in particular the two anti-discrimination directives (Directive 2000/43/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment of persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin⁶ and Directive 2000/78/EC establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation⁷), as well as to the above-mentioned Framework Decision on combating racism and xenophobia,
- having regard to Resolution 1344 of 29 September 2003 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on the threat posed to democracy by extremist parties and movements in Europe,

¹ OJ C 85, 17.3.1997, p. 150.

² OJ C 300 E, 9.12.2006, p. 491.

³ Texts adopted, P6_TA(2007)0552.

⁴ OJ C 253 E, 13.10.2005, p. 37.

⁵ OJ L 53, 22.2.2007, p. 1.

⁶ OJ L 180, 19.7.2000, p. 22.

⁷ OJ L 303, 2.12.2000, p. 16.

- having regard to the Report on Racism and Xenophobia in the Member States of the EU published in 2007 by the Fundamental Rights Agency,
 - having regard to the report by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) entitled 'Challenges and Responses to Hate-Motivated Incidents in the OSCE Region' of October 2006,
 - having regard to Rule 103(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. seriously concerned at the resurgence in Europe of extremist movements and paramilitary groups and parties, some of which even have governmental responsibilities, which base their ideology, political discourse, practices and conduct on discrimination, including racism, intolerance, incitement to religious hatred, exclusion, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, anti-Gypsyism, homophobia, misogyny and ultra-nationalism, and whereas several European countries have recently experienced hatred, violent events and killings,
 - B. seriously alarmed at the Islamic fundamentalist recruitment and violent propaganda campaign with terrorist attacks within the European Union, based on the hatred of European values and anti-semitism,
 - C. whereas these extremist ideologies are incompatible with the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law as set out in Article 6 of the EU Treaty, which reflect the values of diversity and equality on which the European Union is based,
 - D. whereas no Member State is immune from the intrinsic threats that extremism poses to democracy and, therefore combating the spread of xenophobic attitudes and extremist political movements is a European challenge that requires a joint and coordinated approach,
 - E. whereas some political parties and movements, including those currently in power in a number of countries or represented at local, national or European level, have deliberately placed intolerance and/or violence based on race, ethnic origin, nationality, religion and sexual orientation at the heart of their agenda,
 - F. whereas neo-Nazi, paramilitary and other extremists are directing their violent attacks against a wide variety of vulnerable population groups, including migrants, the Roma, homosexuals, anti-racist activists and the homeless,
 - G. whereas the existence of public and easily accessible websites which incite to hatred raises serious concerns as to how to counteract the problem without violating freedom of expression,
1. Strongly condemns all racist and hate attacks, and calls on all authorities to do everything in their power to punish those responsible; expresses its solidarity with all victims of such attacks and their families;
 2. Points out that fighting extremism must not have any negative effects on the permanent obligation to respect fundamental rights and fundamental legal principles, including freedom of expression and association, as enshrined in Article 6 of the EU Treaty;
 3. Deplores the fact that some mainstream parties have seen fit to give credibility and

acceptance to extremist parties by entering into coalition agreements, thereby sacrificing their moral integrity for the sake of short-term political gain and expediency;

4. Notes that the increasing number of extremist organisations, which often contain neo-fascist elements, can exacerbate fears in society that can lead to manifestations of racism in a broad range of areas, including employment, housing, education, health, policing, access to goods and services and the media;
5. Urges the Commission and Council to lead the search for appropriate political and legal responses, especially at the preventive stage with reference to young people's education and public information, teaching against totalitarianism and disseminating the principles of human rights and fundamental freedoms in order to keep alive the memory of European history; calls upon the Member States to develop policies of education for democratic citizenship based on citizens' rights and responsibilities;
6. Urges the Commission to monitor the full application of the existing legislation designed to prohibit incitement to political and religious violence, racism and xenophobia; calls on Member States to monitor the strict implementation and constant improvement of anti-racist laws, information and awareness-raising campaigns in the media and educational establishments;
7. Urges all democratic political forces, regardless of ideology, to avoid any support for extremist parties of a racist or xenophobic character, whether explicit or implicit, and hence also any alliance whatsoever with their elected representatives;
8. Warns, looking ahead to the 2009 European elections, of the possibility that extremist parties may secure representation in the European Parliament and calls on the political groups to take the appropriate measures in order to ensure that a democratic institution is not used as a platform for financing and echoing anti-democratic messages;
9. Calls on the EU institutions to give a clear mandate to the Fundamental Rights Agency to investigate the structures of extremist groups in order to assess whether some of them coordinate their work within their groups across the European Union or at regional level;
10. Reiterates its belief that public personalities should refrain from statements that encourage or incite to hatred or stigmatisation of groups of people on the basis of their race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation or nationality; believes that if public personalities incite to hatred, the fact that they have a high public profile should be considered an aggravating circumstance; condemns, in particular, the worrying prevalence of anti-semitism;
11. Calls on the media to inform the public about the dangers of hate speech and to help promote the principles and values of democracy, equality and tolerance;
12. Requests all Member States to at least provide for the possibility - after a court ruling - of withdrawing public funding from political parties that do not condemn violence and terrorism and do not respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law as set out in the ECHR and the Charter of Fundamental Rights; and calls on those that already have this possibility to do so without delay; also calls on the Commission to ensure that no EU funding is available to media which are used as a platform to widely promote racist, xenophobic and homophobic ideas;

13. Calls on the Commission to support NGOs and civil society organisations devoted to promoting democratic values, human dignity, solidarity, social inclusion, inter-cultural dialogue and social awareness of the dangers of radicalisation and violent extremism, and which are devoted to fighting all forms of discrimination;
14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments of the Member States and the Council of Europe.