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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 48 of the Rules of Procedure

by Maurizio Turco, Marco Pannella, Marco Cappato, Michael Cashman, Chris Davies, Manuel António dos Santos, Heidi Anneli Hautala, Anna Karamanou, Lousewies van der Laan, Helmuth Markov, Véronique Mathieu, Elly Plooijs-van Gorsel, Ulla Margrethe Sandbæk and Patsy Sørensen

on confirmation of the jurisdiction of civil courts over ecclesiastical courts in cases of paedophilia

Motion for a European Parliament resolution on confirmation of the jurisdiction of civil courts over ecclesiastical courts in cases of paedophilia

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 6 and 29 of the EU Treaty,
- A. whereas the scandals that have erupted in various parts of the world have revealed the large scale of sexual abuse and harm caused to minors by Catholic priests, to which senior figures in the Church have reacted with an unacceptable silence, neglect and cover-up,
- B. whereas, following the extraordinary crisis meeting held at the Vatican on 23 and 24 April 2002 the only measures announced by the Catholic ecclesiastical hierarchy are guidelines designed to restore the confidence and trust of families and the faithful and special procedures to dismiss priests guilty of paedophilia from the clergy, ignoring the question of cooperation with the civil judicial authorities,

Calls on the Council, the Commission and the Member States, within the framework of their own cooperation to combat paedophilia:

1. to draw the attention of the Holy See to the principle that ecclesiastical proceedings and penalties cannot replace criminal proceedings and criminal penalties in the case of criminal offences;
2. to impose a specific and more stringent penalty whenever the abuse of minors is committed by a priest of any faith.