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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

tabled for the debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 50 of the Rules of Procedure

by Enrique BARÓN CRESPO, Hannes SWOBODA, Max VAN DEN BERG,
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on behalf of the PES Group

on the political situation in Iran prior to the parliamentary elections of 20
February 2004

PE 341.229

European parliament resolution on the political situation in Iran prior to the parliamentary elections of 20 February 2004

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 13 December 2001 on EU relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran (A5-0418/2001),
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on Iran,
 - having regard to the UNGA Resolution of December 2003 on Human Rights,
 - having regard to Rule 50 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas information on the banning of candidates by the conservative-dominated Council of Guardians changes on a daily basis; whereas, in all cases, the extent of these disqualifications is unprecedented and concerns - among the current members - almost exclusively Parliamentarians of the Participation Front close to President Khatami;
- B. noting the agreement reached between President Khatami, the President of Parliament, Mr. Karoubi, and the supreme leader Khamenei, to hold elections on 20 February 2004;
- C. deploring the fact that the reformist cause seems to be increasingly discredited through the manoeuvres of the hardliners in the upcoming elections; fearing that the public will be further alienated from the political class as a whole and that a likely huge abstention rate at the elections will play into the hands of conservative and backward-oriented forces;
- D. whereas Iran plays potentially an important and constructive strategic role to regional stability, in particular in relation to Afghanistan and Iraq;
1. expresses its deep concern at the attempts by the Guardian Council to manipulate the composition of the next Majlis in favour of the Conservatives, thus preventing a free and democratic choice of the Iranian people; warns that the lack of respect for democratic procedures may lead not only to a Parliament unable to legitimise itself but also to a weakening of Iran's stance in the international community;
 2. regrets that the EP's wish to send an observer mission to the elections did not materialise because of lack of support from the Iranian authorities;
 3. notes that the undermining of the reform-minded majority of the current Majlis by the Guardian Council has been a continuous phenomenon; since 2000, more than one third of all bills ratified by Parliament have been vetoed by the Guardian Council;

4. considers that the fundamental problem with regard to the country's political situation is the largely unreformed power structure which all too often overrules the decisions based on the democratic will of the people of Iran;
5. calls for a truly fair and free electoral process which gives all candidates a fair and equal chance;
6. while acknowledging Iran's participation in a Human Rights dialogue with the EU, regrets the limited scope of this dialogue and insists on a more result oriented approach on such topics as freedom of expression and torture; particularly condemns the continued discrimination against women and against minorities, in particular against the biggest religious minority in the country, the Baha'i;
7. demands that Iran abolish the death penalty, in particular stoning; considers that the current moratorium on stoning has to be strictly monitored and observed, and that the legislation should be modified in order to guarantee that this particularly atrocious form of death penalty is definitely abandoned;
8. recognises again the positive move made by Iran in signing the additional protocol for nuclear material safeguards and hopes that the Majlis will ratify the text within a reasonable deadline;
9. calls on the Iranian Government to pursue a more active and constructive policy in order to contribute to the conflict solution in the Greater Middle East region;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, the Governments of the Member States, President Khatami, the Council of Guardians and the Iranian Parliament.