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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 Mario Mauro, Laima Liucija Andrikienė, Charles Tannock, Bernd Posselt, Esther De Lange, Bogusław Sonik, Anna Záborská, Antonio Tajani

on behalf of the PPE-DE Group

on Serious events which compromise the existence of Christian communities, and other communities, in the Middle East and in other parts of the world

**European Parliament resolution on Serious events which compromise the existence of Christian communities, and other communities, in the Middle East and in other parts of the world**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its resolution of 24 February 2005 on the EU's priorities and recommendations for the 61st session of the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva,
  - having regard to its resolution of 28 April 2005 on the Annual Report on Human Rights in the World 2004 and the EU's policy on the matter,
  - having regard to its resolution of 6 July 2005 on the European Union and Iraq – A framework for engagement,
  - having regard to its resolution of 6 April 2006 on Iraq: the Assyrian community; the situation in Iraqi prisons,
  - having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas in some countries in the Middle East Christians live and die like in a no man's land, they suffer from persecution in Sudan and Darfur, and assassination attempts and killings in Iraq and other countries,
- B. whereas the murder in Gaza of Rami Khader Ayyad demonstrates that these are only the latest signs of longer and hidden processes taking place in Palestine, in the Lebanon and in other areas of the region, where Christian communities, subjected to ostracism, are decreasing with a consequent risk of extinction,
- C. concerned at the recent violent events in Iraq, among others: the kidnapping of two catholic priests on 14 October 2007 in Mosul, Fathers Pius Afas and Mazen Ishaq; the assassination of two Assyrian Christians members of the organisation National Union of Bet-Nahrin on 28 June 2007 in Mosul, Zuhair Youssef Astavo Kermles and Luay Solomon Numan; the murder of a Chaldean priest on 3 June 2007 in Mosul, P. Ragheed Ganni, and of three deacons who were his aides,
- D. concerned at the recent violent events in Pakistan, among others: the attack on a catholic church on 10 October 2007 in Gowindh in the area of Hadyara, at the outskirts of Lahore; the bombing which seriously damaged the "Saint John Bosco Model School" on 15 September 2007, a school run by Mill Hill missionaries in the district of Bannu; the assassination of the Protestant Bishop Arif Khan and his wife on 29 August 2007 in Islamabad,

- E. saddened by the murder of two young Copts on 3 October 2007 in Awlad Toq Garb in the district of Dar El-Salaam (Egypt), Wasfi Sadek Ishaq and Karam Klieb Endarawis,
- F. horrified by the attack against the Christian publishing house Zirve on 18 April 2007 in Malatya (Turkey) during which three Christians, Tilmann Geske, Necati Aydin e Ugur Yuksel, were slain by slitting their throats,
- G. whereas this amounts to a strategy of erosion and of effective destruction of entire populations and historical experiences of old Christian tradition, like a process of ethnic cleansing capable of changing the religious geography of places that have preserved for centuries, in spite of everything, an effective internal pluralism,
- H. whereas the responsibilities of the political leaders are evident because they have not addressed the problem of murders and persecutions; whereas the thousands of victims in Darfur are blamed on the situation of chaos and terror in the region,
- I. whereas in Lebanon the drastic decrease in the number of Christians, who represent by now less than half the population of the country, seems the spontaneous result of the decline in national sovereignty; whereas in Iraq the assassination attempts are blamed on an endless post-war situation,
- L. whereas on 10 May 2007 the European Parliament adopted a report where, for the first time, it recognised the respect of the principle of reciprocity as an essential condition for the advancement of relations between the EU and Arab countries,
- M. whereas in its resolution of 25 October 2007 on Pakistan it expresses its concern at the current repression of Christian minorities and at the use of the laws on blasphemy against them,
- N. whereas in its resolution of 25 October 2007 on Iran it invites the Iranian authorities to abide by the international covenants and agreements concerning the protection of religious minorities, and condemns the current lack of respect for the rights of such minorities,
- O. whereas in its resolution of 25 October 2007 on EU-Turkey relations it strongly condemns the assassination of Hrant Dink, of the Christian priest Andrea Santoro, and of the three Christians in Malatya,
- P. whereas the exodus of Christians from Iraq is cause for serious concern, underlined by the fact that in 2006 on a total of 38.000 Iraqis registered by the UNHCR in Syria, about 24% was Christian and whereas the internal displacement of people within Iraq concerns more than two million persons, a large majority of whom belong to Christian minorities, who mainly move to the Nineveh plains,
- Q. whereas no heads of government, no community institutions or political movements have made any efforts, nor have any proposals been put forward or any observatories been set up to ensure the protection of the many Christians that pay with their lives their commitment and loyalty in testifying their faith; whereas an example of this indifference is given by the silence on the occasion of father Giancarlo Bossi's

kidnapping in the Philippines,

- R. whereas religious freedom is the key for ensuring the respect of all the other freedoms and human rights; whereas the persecution of Christians in the world represents one of the most ferocious contemporary challenges against human dignity,
1. Strongly condemns all acts of violence against the Christian communities in some countries in the Middle East; urges the governments of the countries concerned to identify and bring to justice the perpetrators of these serious crimes as soon as possible;
  2. Urges the governments of the countries concerned to protect the Christian communities from discrimination under the international treaties and agreements that they have ratified;
  3. Urges the governments of the countries concerned to improve the security situation of the Christian communities;
  4. Calls on the Commission and the Council to take all necessary diplomatic and other measures in order to assist and protect the Christian communities in the countries where they are in trouble, through the promotion of multilateral meetings in order to suggest immediate safeguard measures, or through the request of a strategic commitment from the countries concerned on the basis of the international treaties on human rights;
  5. Calls on the Commission, the Council and the Member States to make further contributions to the strengthening of human rights and the rule of law throughout the Middle East;
  6. Calls on the Commission and the Council to pay particular attention to the position of religious minorities when allocating aid to the regions concerned;
  7. Recommends a report be drawn up by its competent committee on the situation of Christian communities in the Middle East;
  8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments of the Middle East countries concerned and the UN Secretary General.