

ORAL QUESTION WITH DEBATE O-0017/03

pursuant to Rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure

by Maurizio Turco, Marco Cappato, Elena Paciotti, Caroline Lucas, Baroness Sarah Ludford, Chris Davies, Carmen Cerdeira Morterero, Michael Cashman, Alain Lipietz, Ilka Schröder, Torben Lund, Ieke van den Burg, Demetrio Volcic, Joke Swiebel, Benedetto Della Vedova, Sérgio Sousa Pinto, Gianni Vattimo, Giorgio Ruffolo, Jean Lambert, Fiorella Ghilardotti, José Mendiluce Pereiro, Johanna Boogerd-Quaak, Joan Vallvé, Paulo Casaca, Alain Krivine, Alima Boumediene-Thiery, Kathalijne Buitenweg, Ole Krarup, Patsy Sørensen, Jan Dhaene, Reinhold Messner, Frédérique Ries, Heidi Hautala, Giuseppe Di Lello Finuoli, Gianfranco Dell'Alba, Marco Pannella, Olivier Dupuis, Andrew Duff and John Bowis  
to the Council

Subject: Persecution of homosexuals in Egypt

An administrative court in Cairo (Egypt) sentenced on 15 March 2003 21 persons to three years' imprisonment and forced labour, while 29 were acquitted in the so-called 'Queen Boat' trial. The sentences were generally harsher than those issued by an Egyptian State Security Court in November 2001, later annulled by the Egyptian President Mubarak: the sentences of those who had originally been convicted were extended on appeal to three years, the maximum sentence allowed under Egyptian law. Parliament had repeatedly condemned the persecution of homosexuals in Egypt, and had asked the Commission and the Council to activate all diplomatic channels and measures to express EU concern.

Having regard to the above grave developments, what measures will the Council take? Will the Council implement progressive measures to condemn the repeated and serious violation of the fundamental human rights of Egyptian citizens and avoid such events happening in future? Does the Council not think that it is necessary and urgent to freeze the implementation of the EU-Egypt Association Agreement until this persecution against homosexuals stops?

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Forwarded: 21.03.2003

Deadline for reply: 11.04.2003