

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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*Session document*

6 February 2002

B5-0057/2002 }  
B5-0064/2002 }  
B5-0070/2002 }  
B5-0078/2002 }  
B5-0087/2002 }  
B5-0095/2002 }

RC1

## JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 50(5) of the Rules of Procedure by

- John Bowis, Vitaliano Gemelli and Hanja Maij-Weggen on behalf of the PPE-DE Group
- Fiorella Ghilardotti and Margrietus J. van den Berg on behalf of the PSE Group
- Marieke Sanders-ten Holte, Bob van den Bos and Lone Dybkjær on behalf of the ELDR Group
- Didier Rod, Nelly Maes and Caroline Lucas on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group
- André Brie on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group
- Cristiana Muscardini on behalf of the UEN Group

replacing the motions by the following groups:

- Verts/ALE (B5-0057/2002),
- UEN (B5-0064/2002),
- PPE-DE (B5-0070/2002),
- GUE/NGL (B5-0078/2002),
- PSE (B5-0087/2002),
- ELDR (B5-0095/2002),

on Eritrea

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PE 314.878}  
PE 314.790}  
PE 314.796}  
PE 314.804}  
PE 314.813}  
PE 314.821} RC1

## European Parliament resolution on Eritrea

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the statement by the presidency of the Union expressing concern at the imprisonment of a number of prominent advocates of democratic reform,
  - having regard to the Council statement expressing concern at the authoritarian trend in the country,
- A. whereas, on the country's independence from Ethiopia in 1991, President Issaias began his presidency with encouraging moves, both towards democracy and in his own modest official lifestyle, but he has since ruled the country with an iron grip, allowing no political opposition, with the PFDJ (ruling People's Front for Democracy and Justice) being the only official party recognised by the government,
- B. pointing out that the Eritrean parliament, all the members of which belong to the Front for Justice and Democracy, has decided to prohibit the formation of political parties in the country,
- C. concerned at the infringements of human rights, including the arrest of politicians and journalists,
- D. concerned at the arrest of representatives of the Eritrean opposition, including 11 former members of the government,
- E. having regard to the ban on an independent press and the arrest of several journalists since September 2001,
- F. whereas a constitution with provisions for creating civil liberties was adopted in 1997, but has never been implemented,
- G. deploring that ten years since independence, President Issaias has yet to formalise his position through the normal democratic process of an election, and that the country's first-ever parliamentary elections scheduled for December 2001 have been shelved indefinitely on the grounds of security concerns,
- H. whereas the growing public dissent and criticism of his rule resulted in a government crack-down on students in August 2001 - with two of the detained students dying whilst in detention in the desert - and reached a nadir in September 2001 when the government ordered the arrest of 11 of the 15 senior government and party figures (G15) for their open criticism of his leadership in a widely-publicised letter,

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- I. whereas nothing has been heard of the prisoners since their arrest but a report currently being discussed in the National Assembly accuses them of treason, in essence because they made their remarks at a time 'when the country should be united in the face of the threat from Ethiopia',
  - J. deploring in the strongest possible terms the expulsion of the Italian Ambassador to Eritrea, Mr Antonio Bandini, on 28 September 2001, following an official protest to the Eritrean government lodged by the EU ambassadors over the above-mentioned human rights violations, and in particular the arrest of the 11 former members of Eritrea's ruling party, the indefinite closure of the country's independent press, and the arrest of independent journalists,
  - K. whereas all EU Member States withdrew their ambassadors from Asmara following the expulsion of the Italian Ambassador, and at an October 2001 meeting the EU expressed its concerns over recent developments in Eritrea in the light of what it described as 'authoritarian developments'; whereas four of the EU envoys (from Germany, Holland, France and Denmark) have meanwhile returned to Asmara, but deploring that this was not co-ordinated at EU level,
  - L. whereas peace on the country's borders and within the country, respect for human rights and the democratic participation of the citizens in political, economic and social life are essential conditions for lasting economic and human development,
  - M. whereas the EU is Eritrea's leading development partner and is expected to provide crucial finance to rebuild the country's war-shattered economy,
1. Condemns the human rights violations in Eritrea, in particular the crack-down on students in August 2001, as well as the arrest of the 11 dissidents and the shutting down of the independent press in September 2001;
  2. Calls for the release of all political prisoners in general and the 11 public figures in particular, known as G15, who wrote an open letter to the President of Eritrea, criticising his authoritarian leadership of the country;
  3. Calls for the ban on an independent press to be lifted;
  4. Deplores the postponement sine-die of the first-ever parliamentary elections scheduled for December 2001, calls for the lifting of the ban on political parties, including the recently formed Eritrean People's Liberation Front Democratic party (EPLF-EP), and calls for a new date for elections to be set as soon as possible, to be conducted under international scrutiny and observation;
  5. Considers that these human rights abuses constitute a flagrant violation of the essential elements referred to in Art. 9 of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement and warrant the immediate opening of consultations pursuant to Art. 96 of the same Agreement;

6. Strongly condemns the expulsion of the Italian Ambassador on 28 September 2001 and demands his immediate reinstatement;
7. Reaffirms its attachment to fundamental freedoms: freedom of expression, including press freedom, freedom of association, including the formation of political parties, trade unions and civil society organisations, and respect for the principle of independence of the judiciary;
8. Calls for the an inter-Eritrean national conference to be held, bringing together the various political leaders and representatives of civil society, with a view to finding a solution to the current crisis and to setting the country on the path to democracy and sustainable development;
9. Calls on the Council and EU Member States to take a co-ordinated stance with regard to relations with Eritrea, to monitor closely the political situation in the country and to make the continuation of EU development co-operation conditional upon substantial progress being achieved in the areas of human rights and democratisation, in particular freedom of speech, press and assembly, and the holding of democratic elections;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Eritrean Government, the African Union, the Commission, the Member States and the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly.