

Resolution on the human rights situation in Crimea, in particular of the Crimean Tatars

2016/2556(RSP) - 04/02/2016 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 472 votes to 79 with 33 abstentions, a resolution on the human rights situation in Crimea, in particular of the Crimean Tatars. The resolution was tabled by the EPP, S&D, ECR, ALDE, and Greens/EFA, groups.

In its resolution, Parliament recalled that several international organisations and human rights groups denounce the fact that human rights protection in Crimea has been severely curtailed since the occupation and illegal annexation of the peninsula by the Russian Federation in early 2014. Targeted abuses have been registered against the Tatar community, the majority of which opposed the Russian takeover and boycotted the so-called referendum on 16 March 2014.

Parliament:

- reiterated its strong commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders and to its free and sovereign choice to pursue a European path;
- recalled its severe condemnation of the illegal annexation by Russia of the Crimean peninsula and the commitment of the EU, its Member States and the international community to implement fully the policy of non-recognition of the illegal annexation of Crimea;
- highlighted the fact that the restoration of Ukrainian control over the peninsula is one of the prerequisites for re-establishing cooperative relations with the Russian Federation, including the suspension of related sanctions.

Members strongly condemned the unprecedented levels of human rights abuses perpetrated against Crimean residents, most notably Crimean Tatars, who do not follow the imposed rule of the so-called local authorities, particularly under the pretext of combating extremism or terrorism. They stressed that, in line with international law, the Tatars, as an indigenous people of Crimea, have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions. They expressed concern about the persecution of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People, the highest executive and representative body of the Crimean Tatars.

Parliament recalled that Russia as an occupying power has the responsibility of ensuring the safety of the whole population and respect for the human, cultural, and religious rights of the indigenous Tatars and all other minorities of Crimea, and of upholding the legal order in Crimea. Members call on Russian authorities and the de facto authorities in Crimea to:

- investigate effectively, impartially and transparently all cases of disappearances, torture and human rights abuses by the police and paramilitary forces active in the Crimean peninsula since February 2014;
- grant unimpeded access to Crimea for international institutions and independent experts from the OSCE, the United Nations and the Council of Europe, as well as for any human rights NGOs or news media outlets that wish to visit, assess and report on the situation in Crimea.

Parliament welcomed the Ukrainian initiative to establish an international negotiation mechanism on the reestablishment of Ukrainian sovereignty over Crimea in the Geneva plus format, which should include direct engagement by the EU. It called on Russia to start negotiations with Ukraine and other parties on the de-occupation of Crimea, to lift trade and energy embargos and to revoke the state of emergency in Crimea.

Lastly, Parliament reiterated its support for the EU's decision to prohibit imports originating from Crimea unless they are accompanied by a certificate of origin from the Ukrainian authorities, as well as for restrictive measures relating to the export of certain goods and technologies, investment, trade and services in Crimea. It asked the Council to continue with these sanctions until the completion of Crimea's full reintegration into the legal order of Ukraine.