

Resolution on Bangladesh, including child marriages

2017/2648(RSP) - 06/04/2017 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 557 votes to 23, with 45 abstentions, a resolution on Bangladesh, including child marriages.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D, ECR, ALDE, Greens/EFA and EFDD groups.

Members noted that according to recent UN data, Bangladesh continues to have one of the worlds highest rates of child marriage, and the highest rate in Asia. 52 % of girls in Bangladesh are married by the time they reach the age of 18 and 18 % by the time they reach 15.

Members recalled that the Government of Bangladesh pledged at the Girl Summit of July 2014 to reduce by one third the number of girls marrying between the ages of 15 and 18 by 2021, to eliminate marriages involving children under 15 by 2021.

Members strongly regretted the adoption of the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 2017 and the loopholes contained in that legislation which provide legal authorisation for child marriage. It called on the Government of Bangladesh to amend the Act so as to close the loopholes and outlaw all marriages involving children.

Members considered that child marriage can be effectively tackled through the promotion of human rights and human dignity and public social policies. They, therefore, called on the Bangladesh authorities to systematically involve communities and civil society, including NGOs and childrens organisations, to tackle the root causes of child marriage in Bangladesh, and to raise awareness in schools.

Freedom of expression: Members urged the Bangladesh authorities to condemn the continuing horrendous acts against freedom of expression and to act to put an immediate end to all acts of violence, harassment, intimidation and censorship against journalists, bloggers and civil society.

The Commission and the EU Delegation in Bangladesh are called upon to raise these issues with the Bangladesh authorities, and on the European External Action Service to raise the issue of the Act at the next EU-Bangladesh Joint Commission meeting.

Lastly, Parliament called on the EU to use all available instruments to support the Government of Bangladesh in respecting its international human rights obligations.