

Thursday 6 May 1999

RES 234

Legislative resolution embodying Parliament's opinion on the proposal for a Council Decision laying down the procedures for the exercise of implementing powers conferred on the Commission (COM(98)0380 — C4-0501/98 — 98/0219(CNS))

(Consultation procedure)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission proposal to the Council, COM(98)0380 — 98/0219(CNS) (1),
 - having been consulted by the Council pursuant to Article 145 (now Article 202) of the EC Treaty (C4-0501/98),
 - having regard to Rule 58 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Institutional Affairs and the opinions of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Security and Defence Policy, the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, the Committee on Budgets, the Committee on Research, Technological Development and Energy, the Committee on External Economic Relations, Committee on Legal Affairs and Citizens' Rights, the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, the Committee on Transport and Tourism, the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection, the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media, the Committee on Civil Liberties and Internal Affairs, the Committee on Budgetary Control, the Committee on Fisheries and the Committee on the Rules of Procedure, the Verification of Credentials and Immunities (A4-0169/99),
1. Approves the Commission proposal, subject to Parliament's amendments;
 2. Calls on the Commission to alter its proposal accordingly, pursuant to Article 250(2) of the EC Treaty;
 3. Notes that the negotiations have progressed on some issues, such as transparency, harmonisation of procedures, Parliament's role, but notes that, as far as simplification is concerned, maintaining regulatory committees would be unacceptable unless the double safety-net procedure were abandoned, while guaranteeing effective decision-making procedures and avoiding a system which might result in no decisions being taken;
 4. Calls for the conciliation procedure to be opened should the Council intend to depart from the text approved by Parliament;
 5. Asks to be consulted again should the Council intend to make substantial modifications to the Commission proposal;
 6. Instructs its President to forward this opinion to the Council and Commission.

(1) OJ C 279, 8.9.1998, p. 5.

22. Situation in Kosovo

B4-0443, 0444, 0445, 0454 and 0485/99

Resolution on Kosovo

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Kosovo and the former Yugoslavia, notably that of 15 April 1999 (1),
- having regard to the outcome of the informal meeting of Heads of State or Government of 14 April 1999 and the conclusions of the meeting of the General Affairs Council of 26/27 April 1999,
- having regard to UN Security Council Resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998) and 1203 (1998).

(1) Minutes of that sitting, Part II, Item 4.

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- A. whereas the violence against the Albanians in Kosovo has continuously escalated, especially since February 1998, and NATO has responded with air strikes against military targets in the former Republic of Yugoslavia, as of 24 March 1999, when all diplomatic efforts to end the conflict had failed,
 - B. deeply shocked by the ever- increasing brutality of the process of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and the further increasing humanitarian tragedy which is taking place in the region as a consequence of this process,
 - C. deeply shocked by the growing number of reports about the intensity of the acts of violence and atrocities committed in connection with this process, especially reports concerning both mass and individual summary executions throughout Kosovo, as well as reports concerning the organized and individual rape of ethnic Albanian women by Serb military and security forces and paramilitaries,
 - D. noting with deep concern the continuing unwillingness of President Milosevic and the Serb and Yugoslav authorities to accept a negotiated solution to the barbaric conflict in Kosovo,
 - E. welcoming therefore the determined efforts by the international community to put an end to the aggression led by the Belgrade regime against the people of Kosovo,
 - F. noting with deep regret that, despite NATO's efforts to limit casualties amongst the population, the NATO air raids against military targets in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia have also caused a number of casualties amongst the civilian population,
 - G. expressing its deep regret that President Milosevic's long-lasting policy of extreme nationalism has brought great hardship to the people in the Southern Balkans including the people of his own country,
 - H. whereas the political and civil rights of the people of Serbia have been increasingly restricted over recent years and have, to all intents and purposes, ceased to exist under the current martial law regime,
 - I. whereas the measures against Serbia are also damaging the economies of Montenegro and the neighbouring states (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYROM, Romania),
 - J. regretting the increased threats against the multi-ethnic society in Montenegro, the Sandjak and in Vojvodina,
 - K. whereas the situation of deportees who have sought refuge outside Kosovo is still worrying despite the sustained efforts of international organisations, the European Union, the Member States and NGOs and whereas several hundred thousand deportees are still blocked inside Kosovo, under the constant threat of attacks by the Serbian army or militias and are in an extremely alarming situation as regards health conditions,
 - L. stressing that the UNHCR has requested that, as an exceptional and temporary measure, a larger number of refugees should be accepted and taken care of in the Member States of the Union,
 - M. whereas increased cooperation and fair burden sharing among the EU Member States is imperative, given the ever more acute refugee crisis,
 - N. emphasising that priority must be given to the need for initiatives for a long-term policy for the whole of the Southern Balkans, including closer cooperation between the countries in the region and the European Union, while noting in this context the proposals to establish association agreements with FYROM and Albania,
 - O. having regard to the increasingly important role of the International Criminal Tribunal on the former Yugoslavia which will only be able to take on the huge amount of work involved in gathering evidence and carrying out investigations into the acts of those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Kosovo if the international community in general and the European Union in particular provide it with new and substantial financial and organisational resources,
- I. Condemns in the strongest terms the terror and the cruel ethnic cleansing that is being perpetrated by the special Serbian police units of the Yugoslav army and paramilitary forces against the population of Kosovo;

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2. Calls on President Milosevic and the Serb and Yugoslav authorities to react positively to the initiatives by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the European Council and to avoid any further suffering of civilians by:
 - immediately ending the campaign of intimidation and expulsion of the civilian population in Kosovo;
 - ceasing all activities of military and paramilitary forces in Kosovo and withdrawing these forces;
 - accepting unconditionally the return of all refugees and displaced persons to their homes;
 - accepting the deployment of an international military force to ensure a secure environment for the return of refugees and the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid; and
 - permitting the international community to verify compliance with the above undertakings;
3. Gives its full support to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in his initiative to broker a peace agreement for Kosovo and invites him to continue these efforts;
4. Insists on the territorial integrity of Kosovo and resists any attempt to divide it;
5. Calls on the Council to increase EU efforts to relieve the critical situation of the displaced persons and refugees in the region by sharing the burden of receiving refugees and by making a substantial contribution to the funding of humanitarian relief in Montenegro, FYROM and Albania, through the EU fund and through the UNHCR;
6. Calls on the Member States to evacuate and take in, as an exceptional and temporary measure, a greater number of refugees from the region, and to prepare for large-scale airlifts, that may be needed to transport large numbers of people temporarily away from the region;
7. Calls on the Commission and the Council to ensure that the UN Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) organises as soon as possible, through the humanitarian agencies, medical and psychological aid and follow-up for women who are the victims of violence and rape in Kosovo;
8. Calls on the Commission and the Council to take the initiative to avoid an epidemic catastrophe in the region and secure the protection of public health;
9. Welcomes the decision taken at the European Council to convene a Conference on South-Eastern Europe which should decide upon further comprehensive measures for the long-term stabilisation, security, democratisation and economic restructuring of the region as a whole, including improving the facilities and opportunities for Kosovo's neighbouring states to strengthen their commercial relations with the EU and reducing the barriers against imports from these states into the EU;
10. Recognises the urgent need for an adequate solution to the coordination problems between humanitarian organisations;
11. Calls on the Union, as a matter of urgency, to incorporate in its humanitarian aid strategy a programme of systematic registration of deportees as a means of countering the measures taken by the Belgrade regime to destroy identity documents;
12. Calls on the Council to support the autonomy of Montenegro;
13. Calls on the Member States to grant to deserters from the FRY army and to conscientious objectors temporary residence in the EU;
14. Emphasizes that a further strengthening of the relationship between the EU and the Russian Federation is essential for the establishment of peace and stability on the European continent as a whole and in the Balkans in particular; therefore invites the Russian Government to continue to cooperate with the EU in their efforts to achieve a peaceful solution to the conflict in Kosovo and to increase stability in the region;
15. Calls on the Council and the Member States to give their full cooperation to the investigations being carried out by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia into the atrocities and crimes against humanity committed in Kosovo in order to bring those responsible to trial;

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16. Believes that, apart from the many abuses committed, the mass deportation of hundreds of thousands of Kosovars, constitutes a sufficient basis — under the Statutes of the International Criminal Tribunal in the former Yugoslavia and, in particular, Articles 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 thereof — for the immediate indictment of the highest political and military authorities in Belgrade, starting with Slobodan Milosevic;

17. Welcomes the US Government's decision to grant special financial aid to the International Criminal Tribunal on the former Yugoslavia and calls on the Council and the Commission to grant an extraordinary financial contribution to the tribunal to enable it to carry out its substantial work of investigation, gathering of evidence and examining of charges against those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Kosovo;

18. Deplores the fact that the Yugoslav leadership has chosen to make its country an international pariah and hopes that its self-imposed isolation can be broken by a policy change towards democratisation and good-neighbourliness;

19. Calls on the Commission and Council to give active support to those inside the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia who are willing to seek a negotiated solution to the conflict and to bring about a process of democratic reform in that country and calls therefore on the Council and the Commission to multiply their efforts to provide information for the people of Serbia and Montenegro, in particular by means of Serbian-language programmes;

20. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, NATO, the UN and the governments of Albania, FYROM, FRY, Montenegro and Serbia and to Dr Ibrahim Rugova.

23. Preparation for the European Council of 3 and 4 June 1999 — Institutional reform

(a) B4-0437, 0440 and 0442/99

Resolution on the preparation of the European Council meeting in Cologne on 3 and 4 June 1999

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the conclusions of the Luxembourg, Cardiff and Vienna European Council meetings,
- having regard to the statements by the Council and the Commission on the preparation of the European Council meeting in Cologne on 3 and 4 June 1999,
- having regard to its resolution of 4 May 1999 on the Commission's recommendation for the broad guidelines of the economic policies of the Member States and the Community ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 4 May 1999 on the Commission's communication on Community policies in support of employment (Article 127) and on the Council's report on the European Employment Pact ⁽²⁾,

1. Welcomes the signs of a strengthening of the European Union; considers it vital that the new President should bring strong political momentum to the Commission; urges the President-designate to appoint a balanced, united and effective team, taking advantage of the possibilities now afforded to him by the Amsterdam Treaty; urges the new President to undertake a root and branch reform of his administration to make it more effective and more transparent;

⁽¹⁾ Minutes of that sitting, Part II, Item 32(a).

⁽²⁾ Minutes of that sitting, Part II, Item 32(b).