

IMPACT

In the public arena

Julia Doxat-Purser
Christel Lamère Ngnambi



EEA's Socio-Political Team, working together with EEA's members.

Issue 6 – December 2007

New Resolution on Christian persecution

A new resolution was adopted during the European Parliament's November 15 plenary. The resolution makes a very strong case for religious freedom and especially the right to change religion in Muslim-majority contexts. It also deals with both violent and non-violent persecution of Christians in the Middle East. The resolution is aware of several events that have hurt the evangelical community in these countries, as it among others declares to be "deploring the murder in Gaza of Rami Khader Ayyad on 7 October 2007, owner of a Christian library in Gaza" and "horrified by the attacks against the Christian publishing house Zirve on 18 April 2007 in Malatya (Turkey), during which three Christians, Tilmann Geske, Necati Aydin and Ugur Yuksel were murdered".

The resolution was adopted with 57 votes in favour and 2 votes against. The resolution was drafted by an Italian Christian-Democrat MEP, Mario Mauro, pushed by his political group (EPP, European People's Party and European Democrats) and supported by the whole Socialist Group (PSE, European

Socialist Party). The text was debated with the participation of Danuta Hübner on behalf of the European Commission. Various parties were represented and MEPs were generally supportive of the motion for this resolution. NGOs such as Christian Solidarity Worldwide had been active in pressing for a more inclusive text which was first much more focused on Catholic minorities. The EEA was kept fully informed through EPRID (the European Platform on Religious Intolerance and Discrimination).

Now that the resolution is adopted, Christian and other human rights organisations have a much more specific legal basis for advocacy, especially as this text has a focus on Christian minorities. Besides, even though the ground for this resolution is the situation in the Middle East, the wording of the resolution is sufficiently encompassing to include both Christian minorities elsewhere and other persecuted religious minorities, while promoting inter-faith dialogue.

Who said nothing good can come out of the European Parliament?

CLN



Julia Doxat-Purser
EEA Socio-Political Representative
& Religious Liberty Coordinator
eea@community-house.co.uk

Christel Lamère Ngnambi
Brussels Manager
christel.ngnambi@europeanea.org

CREDITS

"European Parliament" by orMone

"Fall II" by macromaven

Available on [Flickr](http://www.flickr.com) – www.flickr.com

Apologist John Lennox impresses the EU institutions

Scientist and apologist John C. Lennox addressed a parterre of people from EU Institutions and various other organisations on 7 November in a Symposium on New Atheism in Brussels, jointly organised by the World Youth Alliance–Europe and FORUMBrussels, a Christian-inspired NGO. New Atheism is a movement spearheaded by popular authors such as Richard Dawkins arguing that religion is dangerous, presumably abolished by science and useless to solve moral problems. His keynote speech was followed by a discussion with theologians and philosophers (including the Prince of Liechtenstein) and moderated by a representative from the European Commission. Participants all claimed to have been impressed by Professor Lennox's approach to religion and agreed that religious issues should be more present and debated on the public arena.

CLN



Campaigning together

Often, it is wise to ignore extreme secularist provocation but, when a draft Council of Europe report said that “creationists” were a danger to democracy and human rights, EEA felt compelled to intervene. Views about “creationism” vary among Evangelicals but everyone deserves religious freedom and protection from excessive insult. Plus, the report was so

badly worded; one could interpret it as saying that all believers in a Creator were dangerous.

Some lobbied the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly with arguments promoting “creationism”, but EEA decided that this prophetic

set us a challenge. Swiss MP, Mr. Schmiel wanted to help but said that we had to propose amendments since asking for a rejection of the report was unrealistic. Christel Ngnambi and I worked as a team, drawing up amendments, knowing we could not propose too many but not wanting to leave a bad report to pass. We were being faced with the realities of political compromise. An unhelpful report was definitely going to be agreed. Could we make it slightly less unhelpful?

Mr. Schmiel then selected half our amendments and took them to Anne Brasseur the rapporteur of the resolution. She accepted all but two. In the actual debate, she thanked Mr. Schmiel for being constructive. The only amendments proposed and accepted were by Mr. Schmiel.

Our lobbying meant that the final resolution was slightly less insulting than the draft, plus it was accepted that evolution needed to be subject to scientific scrutiny like any other theory. But the resolution was still problematic.

Did we fail? In some ways, yes we did. However, we won what was possible to win. In the debate, a British MP quoted EEA’s brief and others spoke in support of our arguments. Evangelicals were seen to be reasonable, constructive and professional. Ironically, this made the accusations in the report seem even more ridiculous.

Only 76 out of 636 parliamentarians were present to vote for the resolution. The Parliamentary Assembly’s decisions are picked up by the media but most politicians did not think it worth bothering to attend this session. The resolution has no legal weight but it will be used by some to justify keeping “creationist” ideas out of school science classes. However, when such arguments appear in your nation, you can use the criticism of the resolution in the debate to urge a fairer, more reasonable discussion. We stand ready to help as needed.

Thanks again to all who helped on this campaign.

JDP

EEA consulted about the ethics of cloned meat

At the end of September, the EEA was invited by the European Group on Ethics of the European Commission to a Round Table on Animal Cloning for Food Supply—an issue that will be in the headlines in a 2 or 3 years’ time. While experts and ethicists presented and debated the technical and ethical feasibility of cloning animals for food supply, the Ethics Group showed a real interest in what not only Christians generally but the European Evangelical Alliance constituency has to say about the issue.

CLN

act was unlikely to change any minds politically. Instead, we wrote a “brief”, pointing out the lack of evidence for the “creationist” threat and that children should not be indoctrinated with any dogma, religious or secular. Rather, free examination of all ideas that pose no threat to law and order must be actively encouraged. Any theory could be taught in science classes, as long as it was subject to scientific scrutiny. We asked for the report to be rejected.

Thank you to all the Evangelical Alliances who reacted swiftly to translate and pass this brief on to the national politicians who would be debating the resolution. Jean-Paul Zürcher of the Romande branch of the Swiss Evangelical Alliance then

Authorisation Team mobilised for ‘Brussels Days’ and farewell to Tove Videbaek

EEA’s Public Policy Authorisation Team (AT) gathered in Brussels from 20 to 22 November to set the socio-political agenda for the coming year. Most AT members took part in a Cocktail Reception in the European Parliament. The reception was co-organised by the EEA and CARE for Europe as well as the World Youth Alliance–Europe (former European Youth Alliance) and hosted by Irish MEP Marian Harkin. The following day the AT met at the EEA office to discuss Brussels priorities and socio-political strategies for the coming year. The team closed with a celebratory meal for Tove Videbaek’s 2 ½ years of service for the EEA in Brussels.

CLN