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EUROPEAN LIBERAL DEMOCRATS
LES LIBERAUX DEMOCRATES EUROPEENS
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
PARLEMENT EUROPEEN

Strasbourg, 2 April 2001

35-298/01

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the debate on topical and urgent subjects of major importance pursuant to Rule 50 of the Rules of Procedure

by Elly Plooij-van Gorsel, Cecilia Malmstrom and Louisewies van der Laan on behalf of the ELDR Group

on violence against Catholic nuns

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
 - having regard to the principles of international and European law relating to human rights,
 - having regard to its resolution of 17 December 1998 on human rights in the world, and the European Union human rights policy,
 - having regard to its resolution of 16 September 1997 on the need to establish a European Union wide campaign for zero tolerance of violence against women,
 - having regard to the European Convention on Human Rights,
- A. whereas the European Parliament consistently condemns violence against women;
- B. whereas the European Parliament consistently condemns rape of women;
- C. Whereas, last week, the Vatican confirmed that it was aware of cases of rape and sexual abuse of women, including nuns, by Catholic priests;
- D. whereas the Holy See had already acknowledged these violations in a written report in February 1994, and again in a confidential meeting on the 21 February 1995;
- E. whereas in official communication with the Holy See, it has been stated as early as 1990 that, "pressure has been exerted on religious women by priests to procure abortions in those hospitals for religious sisters";
- F. whereas the report made in February 1994 by Maura O'Donohue, member of the Medical Missionaries of Maria, identified that these types of violations take place in

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at least 23 countries including Ireland, Italy and the United States of America;

- G. whereas her report notifying the appropriate Holy See officials of these human rights violations was only responded to confidentially, without any form of action for seven years;
- H. whereas Sister Marie McDonald, presented a four page paper entitled " The Problem of the Sexual Abuse of African Religious authorities in Africa and Rome" to the Council of 16 in November 1998;
- I. whereas Joaquin Navarro-Valls, official spokesman for the Holy See, stated that " the problem is known, and is restricted to a geographically limited area.",
- J. whereas the Holy See has used its position as permanent observer status of the UN to obstruct assistance to rape victims that have become pregnant,
- K. whereas the Holy See is one of the foremost opponents to sexual and reproductive rights of women in the UN, as demonstrated among others during the war in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia and Bosnia;
1. condemns violation of all women's rights and bodies; and expresses its solidarity with the victims;
 2. calls on the Holy See to make public the five reports prepared by members of the Catholic orders, dating back to 1994;
 3. calls on the Holy See and all countries involved to bring the perpetrators to justice through fair procedure;
 4. calls on the Holy See to reinstate those female officials who have been ousted from their positions for drawing their supervisors attention to these abuses and provide the necessary protection and compensation from discrimination which might ensue;
 5. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments of the Member States, as well as the government of the Holy See and the UN High Commissioner for human rights.

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