

Adopted resolution

ON THE SITUATION IN ITALY

The Council of the European Green Party meeting in Barcelona from the 19th to 21st March 2009:

- a. Considering that the fundamentals on which European integration should be based are the respect of the rule of law, the separation of powers, democracy, freedom of expression and circulation, the rejection of racism and discrimination of all types and an open and regulated economic system,
 - b. Considering that all these aspects of a normal modern democracy are today under attack in Italy and considering that this is not only an issue for Italy but is increasingly becoming a European problem,
1. Expresses its deep concern on the persistent and massive conflict of interests of the Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, whose business activities range from owning 3 national private channels which control over 60% of the advertising market, to football, to assurance companies, construction and financial companies; that Mr. Berlusconi has been investigated 16 times for crimes including corruption, he was acquitted twice, and managed to avoid being found guilty in the other cases only by changing the laws, thus constituting an unprecedented example of impunity and of misuse of the government and the Parliament for private goals;
 2. Is particularly worried about the fact that he and his government also have strict control also of RAI and of several newspapers; this situation has a major influence on the election results, since it is proven that in Italy about 93% of the population follows information on TV and 23% forms its political opinion exclusively on TV; this situation contradicts all directives of internationally recognized bodies on the conditions necessary to ensure a fair electoral campaign; the EGP calls therefore on the European Commission and the OCSE to launch an enquiry into the standards of procedures in Italian elections.
 3. Is extremely concerned about the presence in the Italian government at national, regional and local level of a political party, the Lega, which openly proclaims racist and discriminatory ideas; this has resulted in the adoption of national and regional laws and regulations which make the life of the migrant community (about 4 million people) increasingly difficult, and multiply violent racist attacks on legal and illegal migrants and to the gipsy community, (notwithstanding the fact that half of them are Italians); the evolution towards public acceptance of racist attitudes was aided by a persistent media campaign which successfully identified non-Italians as criminals; furthermore, more and more violent acts of discrimination are observed towards the lesbian and gay community, something that was unknown in Italy in previous years. Such an evolution owes a lot to the very aggressive attitude of the Catholic Church towards all sexual behaviour which is not in line with the strict rules of the hierarchy; this has had a major influence also on the regression of civil rights in Italy in general, be it for women, minorities, non-married couples, etc; the Catholic church has played a major role in legitimizing the authority of Mr. Berlusconi, notwithstanding his recent scandalous public behaviour and the evident corruption of some of his closest allies, by agreeing to be silent about them and receiving in exchange laws allowing very considerable tax cuts, subsidies for catholic schools (forbidden by the Constitution) and continuous presence in the private and public media.
 4. Is conscious of the fact that some parts of the Southern regions of Italy, and notably Calabria, Campania and Sicily, are under the control of organised crime organisations, which represents every year a business of about 120 billion euros and that has strong activities and ties with other criminal circles in Germany, Spain, Switzerland, Belgium, United Kingdom, Austria, Bulgaria, Romania among others; it is proven that in the South of Italy the use of EU funds is heavily influenced by criminal gangs connected to local authorities; even if very important arrests took place in recent times and the police and judicial system are efficient and competent, it is clear that the whole political and institutional system which favours the non respect of the law at its highest level is not helpful in combating this phenomenon;
 5. Expresses its deep disappointment at the attitude of the Italian government on all issues concerning climate change and environmental policies; the Italian parliament recently adopted a resolution denying the very existence of climate changes and decided without any public debate to go nuclear;

furthermore, Italy has consistently opposed any progress towards a stronger commitment by the EU and at present it opposes the possibility for the EU to take further commitments towards 30%-40% emission reductions and has refused to take steps that would allow it to meet the goals set in terms of renewable energies, notwithstanding the fact that Italy has a great potential in this matter. And Italy remains the most important offender regarding EU laws in issues like waste, natura2000-Habitat, environmental impact assessment, public tendering.

6. Is extremely critical of the passive and condescending attitude of the European Commission towards Italy's violation of EU laws and of the proven refusal of OLAF to inquire enquiring the misuse of EU funds in the South of Italy; indeed, most of the regulations and laws concerning migrant workers, the absence of asylum rules, obstacles to free circulation, the non respect of public tendering and competition rules, the waste scandals and the corruption around EU funds are a direct consequence of the non respect of EU laws about which the EU has remained silent or simply started routine infraction procedures. The persistent conflict of interests and the control by Mr. Berlusconi of a major part of the media in Italy are also a direct consequence of the persistent failure of the Commission and Council to answer to the request of the EP for a directive on media concentration and pluralism;
7. Is committed to develop a strategy in cooperation with the Green Group in the European Parliament aimed at maintaining public attention regarding the situation in Italy and to pressure the EU institutions to act vigorously in this respect; is also committed to cooperate with the Italian Greens, with other opposition forces and civil society associations in order to bring Italy back to where it can play a positive role in Europe. Is ready to envisage, in cooperation with the GGEP, the possibility of starting a procedure against Italy on violation of fundamental rights according to (ex) art. 7 of the Treaty.