

## EU MOTION CALLS CAA 'DISCRIMINATORY'

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Europe, European Union (EU) and India

Members of the European Union delegation to Kashmir at Dal Lake in Srinagar on October 29, 2019. NISSAR AHMAD NISSAR AHMAD

Five groups at the European Parliament tabled a joint motion resolution on Tuesday that "condemned" India's decision to adopt the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA).

In a boost for the government's efforts to counter the resolution, one group of the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) with 66 members, that had earlier been a part of the resolution, decided to drop out.

The other five groups, representing a total of 560 of the 751 MEPs in the Parliament, have agreed to the joint motion, although it is unclear how many will finally vote for the resolution.

The final draft, that will be discussed and voted on, retains the strong language condemning the police action on protesters as a "brutal crackdown" particularly on university campuses, and severely criticises the detentions, alleged torture and the Internet shutdown undertaken in Uttar Pradesh and other States.

### Concern over NRC

The resolution also expresses concerns about the National Register of Citizens (NRC), and calls on India to adhere to UN Human Rights Council procedures.

While the EU Parliament has little power to enforce its resolutions, the strong wording of the document could hamper the atmosphere for talks with India.

Over the past few days the government had intensified efforts to reach out to Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), with diplomats led by India's Ambassador in Brussels Gaitri Issar Kumar meeting with the six various groups behind the resolutions criticising India, as well as individual MEPs who might oppose them.

According to government sources, the spotlight was also on the MEPs who were part of the 23-member tour to India, who had been hosted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other senior officials in Delhi, and conducted by the Indian Army during their stay in Srinagar.

Of the 23 members, at least eight belonged to groups that originally tabled a resolution on India, including five from the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), two from the European People's Party or Christian Democrats (EPP), and one from the Renew Group. The majority of the delegation belonged to the far-right Identity and Democracy group (I&D), which did not propose any resolution on India. The outreach appeared to be successful in bringing at least one of the groups, the ECR to India's side of the debate. Vice-Chair of the ECR group, Hermann Tertsch, who spoke to The Hindu earlier in the day said that his group was "uncomfortable" with the harsh language the other groups were attempting to add.

Indian-origin MEP from the Renew group Dinesh Dhamija too said the draft was "very broad based and ill-informed" and had not been cleared by all the members of each grouping tabling a resolution. Mr. Dhamija, is one of 108 members in the Renew group at the European parliament, and told The Hindu he disagreed with the resolution put forth. Mr. Dhamija said that he worried

most that the resolutions were timed to “derail” India-EU relations ahead of the EU-India summit scheduled for March 13th, and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar’s visit in February. However he denied government claims that Pakistan and Left-wing parties were behind the decision to bring a discussion on India’s citizenship act to the house.

Officials also tried to convince MEPs to hold the discussions on Wednesday, but not to hold the vote that is scheduled for Thursday, as had been done with the previous EU Parliament motion on Jammu and Kashmir in September 2019.

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