



YOUNG EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS

ECOSY Bureau Meeting
The Netherlands
19th - 21st November 2004

Resolution on the recent violence in the Netherlands

ECOSY, Young European Socialists, condemn the brutal killing of film director and journalist Theo van Gogh, on Tuesday 2nd November. Theo van Gogh was known for his outspoken criticism towards different religious groups and especially the Islam. Although his statements were often offending, words may never be answered by violence.

Freedom of speech should stay a fundamental right in our European societies. This is especially true for people working in cultural sectors, for artists have always been important to put forward points for discussion in a society.

The points for discussion put forward today are those of multiculturalism, integration and religious extremism. It is obvious that in these days tension between ethnical groups in the Netherlands is bigger than ever before. Mosques, Islamic schools and churches have been set on fire. These violent acts are not acceptable.

ECOSY believes in the multicultural society where people with different ethnical and religious backgrounds can live peacefully together. The practical implication of this ideal is integration of the different existing groups. This process should be led by intercultural dialogue. Understanding of each other is of essential importance to take away mutual fear. Integration should always be a reciprocal process and should not lead to assimilation or discrimination of minorities.

The killing of Theo van Gogh was probably an act of religious extremism. And the violations of religious institutions the following days were probably acts of right wing extremism. There is no place for violent extremism in an open and democratic society. Therefore the state and especially international institutions should work together to track down extremism and bring offenders of democracy, freedom of religion and freedom of speech to court. Repression is needed, but this should be used with caution not to be discriminative or to violate even more freedoms.

ECOSY calls for respect for each other, each others opinions and each others religions. The democratic society is a vulnerable one, but the only way to achieve freedom and equality for all.